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A COOK OF ENGLISH PROSE

FOR

B.A. STUDENTS.

(Prescribed by the Panjab University)

BY

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THE TINKER.

GEORGE BORROW.

After walking some time, I found myself on the great road, at the same spot where I had turned aside the day before with my new-made acquaintance, in the direction of his house. I now continued my journey as before, towards the north. The weather, though beautiful, was much cooler than it had been for some time past. I walked at a great rate, with a springing and elastic step. In about two hours I came to where a kind of cottage stood a little way back from the road, with a huge oak tree before it, under the shade of which stood a little pony and cart, which seemed to contain various articles. I was going past, when I saw scrawled over the door of the cottage, "Good beer sold here"; upon which, feeling myself all of a sudden very thirsty, I determined to go in and taste the beverage.

I entered a well-sanded kitchen, and seated myself on a bench, on one side of a long white table; the other side, which was nearest the wall, was occupied by a party, or rather family, consisting of a grimy-looking man, somewhat under the middle size, dressed in faded velveteens, and wearing a leather apron—a rather pretty-looking woman, but sunburnt, and meanly dressed, and two ragged children, a boy and a girl, about four or five years old. The man sat with his eyes fixed upon the table, supporting his chin with both his hands; the woman, who was next to

him, sat quite still, save that occasionally she turned a glance upon her husband with eyes that appeared to have been lately crying. The children had none of the vivacity so general at their age. A more disconsolate family I had never seen; a mug, which, when filled, might contain half a pint, stood empty before them—a very disconsolate party indeed.

“House!” said I; “house!” and then as nobody appeared, I cried again as loud as I could, “House! do you hear me, house!”

“What’s your pleasure, young man?” said an elderly woman, who now made her appearance from a side apartment.

“To taste your ale,” said I.

“How much?” said the woman, stretching out her hand towards the empty mug upon the table.

“The largest measure-full in your house,” said I, putting back her hand gently. “This is not the season for half-pint mugs.”

“As you will, young man,” said the landlady; and presently brought in an earthen pitcher which might contain about three pints, and which foamed and frothed withal.

“Will this pay for it?” said I, putting down six pence.

“I have to return you a penny,” said the landlady, putting her hand into her pocket.

“I want no change,” said I, flourishing my hand with an air.

"As you please, young gentleman," said the landlady, and then making a kind of curtsy she again retired to the side apartment.

"Here is your health, sir," said I to the grimy-looking man, as I raised the pitcher to my lips.

The tinker, for such I supposed him to be, without altering his posture, raised his eyes, looked at me for a moment, gave a slight nod, and then once more fixed his eyes upon the table. I took a draught of the ale, which I found excellent. "Won't you drink?" said I, holding the pitcher to the tinker.

The man again lifted his eyes, looked at me, and then at the pitcher, and then at me again. I thought at one time that he was about to shake his head in sign of refusal, but no, he looked once more at the pitcher, and the temptation was too strong. Slowly removing his head from his arms, he took the pitcher, sighed, nodded, and drank a tolerable quantity, and then set the pitcher down before me upon the table.

"You had better mend your draught," said I to the tinker, "it is a sad heart that never rejoices."

"That's true," said the tinker, and again raising the pitcher to his lips, he mended his draught as I had bidden him, drinking a larger quantity than before.

"Pass it to your wife," said I.

The poor woman took the pitcher from the man's hand; before, however, raising it to her lips, she looked at the children. True mother's

heart, thought I to myself, and taking the half-pint mug, I made her fill it, and then held it to the children, causing each to take a draught. The woman wiped her eyes with the corner of her gown before she raised the pitcher and drank to my health.

In about five minutes none of the family looked half so disconsolate as before, and the tinker and I were in deep discourse.

Oh, genial and gladdening is the power of good ale, the true and proper drink of Englishmen. He is not deserving of the name of Englishman who speaketh against ale, that is, good ale, like that which has just made merry the hearts of this poor family; and yet there are beings, calling themselves Englishmen, who say that it is a sin to drink a cup of ale, and who on coming to this passage, will be tempted to fling down the book and exclaim, "The man is evidently a bad man, for behold, by his own confession, he is not only fond of ale himself, but he is in the habit of tempting other people with it." Alas! alas! what a number of silly individuals there are in this world; I wonder what they would have had me do in this instance—given the afflicted family a cup of cold water? go to! They could have found water in the road, for there was a pellucid spring only a few yards distant from the house, as they were well aware—but they wanted not water; what should I have given them? meat and bread? go to! They were not hungry; there was stifled sobbing in their bosoms, and the first mouthful of strong meat would have choked them. What should I have given them?

Money! what right had I to insult them by offering them money? Advice! words, words, words; friends, there is a time for everything; there is a time for a cup of cold water; there is a time for strong meat and bread; there is a time for advice, and there is a time for ale; and I have generally found that the time for advice is after a cup of ale. I do not say many cups; the tongue then speaketh more smoothly, and the ear listeneth more benignantly; but why do I attempt to reason with you? Do I not know you for conceited creatures, with one idea—and that a foolish one;—a crotchet, for the sake of which ye would sacrifice anything, religion if required—country? There, fling down my book, I do not wish ye to walk any farther in my company, unless you cast your nonsense away, which ye will never do, for it is the breath of your nostrils; fling down my book, it was not written to support a crotchet, for know one thing, my good people, I have invariably been an enemy to humbug.

“Well,” said the tinker, after we had discoursed some time, “I little thought when I first saw you, that you were of my own trade.”

Myself. Nor am I; at least not exactly. There is not much difference, 'tis true, between a tinker and a smith.

Tinker. You are a whitesmith, then?

Myself. Not I, I'd scorn to be anything so mean; no, friend, black's the colour; I am a brother of the horse-shoe. Success to the hammer and tongs.

Tinker. Well, I shouldn't have thought you had been a blacksmith by your hands.

Myself. I have seen them, however, as black as yours. The truth is, I have not worked for many a day.

Tinker. Where did you serve first ?

Myself. In Ireland.

Tinker. That's a good way off, isn't it ?

Myself. Not very far ; over those mountains to the left, and the run of salt water that lies behind them, there's Ireland.

Tinker. It's a fine thing to be a scholar.

Myself. Not half so fine as to be a tinker.

Tinker. How you talk !

Myself. Nothing but the truth ; what can be better than to be one's own master ? Now a tinker is his own master, a scholar is not. Let us suppose the best of scholars, a schoolmaster, for example, for I suppose you will admit that no one can be higher in scholarship than a schoolmaster ; do you call his a pleasant life ? I don't ; we should call him a school-slave rather than a schoolmaster. Only conceive him in blessed weather like this, in his close school, teaching children to write in copy-books, " Evil communication corrupts good manners," or " You cannot touch pitch without defilement," or to spell out of Abecedariums, or to read out Jack Smith, or Sandford and Merton. Only conceive him, I say, drudging in such guise from morning till night, without any rational enjoyment but to beat the children. Would you compare such a

dog's life as that with your own—the happiest under heaven—true Eden life, as the Germans would say—pitching your tent under the pleasant hedgerow, listening to the song of the feathered tribes, collecting all the leaky kettles in the neighbourhood, soldering and joining, earning your honest bread by the wholesome sweat of your brow—making ten holes—hey, what's this? what's the man crying for? .

Suddenly the tinker had covered his face with his hands, and begun to sob and moan like a man in the deepest distress; the breast of his wife was heaved with emotion; even the children were agitated, the youngest began to roar.

Myself. What's the matter with you; what are you crying about?

Tinker (uncovering his face). Lord, why to hear you talk; isn't that enough to make anybody cry—even the poor babes? Yes, you said right, 'tis life in the garden of Eden—the tinker's. I see so now that I am about to give it up.

Myself. Give it up! you must not think of such a thing.

Tinker. No, I can't bear to think of it, and yet I must; what's to be done? How hard to be frightened to death, to be driven off the roads.

Myself. Who has driven you off the roads?

Tinker. Who! the Flaming Tinman.

Myself. Who is he?

Tinker. The biggest rogue in England, and the cruellest, or he wouldn't have served me as he has done—I'll tell you all about it. I was

born upon the roads, and so was my father before me, and my mother too ; and I worked with them as long as they lived, as a dutiful child, for I have nothing to reproach myself with on their account ; and when my father died, I took up the business, and went his beat, and supported my mother for the little time she lived ; and when she died I married this young woman, who was not born upon the roads, but was a small tradesman's daughter, at Glo'ster. She had a kindness for me, and notwithstanding her friends were against the match, she married the poor tinker, and came to live with him upon the roads. Well, young man, for six or seven years I was the happiest fellow breathing, living just the life you described just now—respected by everybody in this beat ; when in an evil hour comes this Black Jack, this flaming tinman, into these parts, driven as they say, out of Yorkshire—for no good, you may be sure. Now, there is no beat will support two tinkers, as you doubtless know ; mine was a good one, but it would not support the flying tinker and myself, though if it would have supported twenty it would have been all the same to the flying villain, who'll brook no one but himself ; so he presently finds me out, and offers to fight me for the beat. Now, being bred upon the roads, I can fight a little, that is with anything like my match, but I was not going to fight him who happens to be twice my size, and so I told him ; whereupon he knocks me down, and would have done me further mischief had not some men been nigh and prevented him ; so he threatened to cut my throat, and went his way. Well, I did not like such usage at all, and was

woundily frightened, and tried to keep as much out of his way as possible, going anywhere but where I thought I was likely to meet him ; and sure enough for several months I contrived to keep out of his way. At last somebody told me he was gone back to Yorkshire, whereupon I was glad at heart, and ventured to show myself, going here and there as I did before. Well, young man, it was yesterday that I and mine set ourselves down in a lane, about five miles from here, and lighted our fire, and had our dinner, and after dinner I sat down to mend three kettles and a frying-pan which the people in the neighbourhood had given me to mend—for, as I told you before, I have a good connection, owing to my honesty. Well, as I sat there hard at work, happy as the day's long, and thinking of anything but what was to happen, who should come up but this Black Jack, this king of the tinkers, rattling along in his cart, with his wife, that they call Gray Moll, by his side—for the villain has got a wife, and a maidservant too ; the last I never saw, but they that has says that she is as big as a house, and young, and well to look at, which can't be all said of Moll, who, though she's big enough in all conscience, is neither young nor handsome. Well, no sooner does he see me and mine, than giving the reins to Gray Moll, he springs out of his cart, and comes straight at me ; not a word did he say, but on he comes straight at me like a wild bull. I am a quiet man, young fellow, but I saw now that quietness would be of no use, so I sprang up upon my legs, and being bred upon the roads, and able to fight a little, I squared as he came running in upon

me, and had a round or two with him. Lord bless you, young man, it was like a fly fighting with an elephant—one of those big beasts the show-folks carry about. I had not a chance with the fellow, he knocked me here, he knocked me there, knocked me into the hedge, and knocked me out again. I was at my last shifts, and my poor wife saw it. Now my poor wife, though she is as gentle as a pigeon, has yet a spirit of her own, and though she wasn't bred upon the roads, can scratch a little, so when she saw me at my last shifts, she flew at the villain—she couldn't bear to see her partner murdered—and she scratched the villain's face. Lord bless you, young man, she had better have been quiet; Gray Moll no sooner saw what she was about, than springing out of the cart, where she had sat all along perfectly quiet, save a little whooping and screeching to encourage her blade:—Gray Moll, I say (my flesh creeps when I think of it—for I am a kind husband, and love my poor wife)—

Myself. Take another draught of the ale; you look frightened, and it will do you good. Stout liquor makes stout heart, as the man says in the play.

Tinker. That's true, young man; here's to you—where was I? Gray Moll no sooner saw what my wife was about, than, springing out of the cart, she flew at my poor wife, clawed off her bonnet in a moment, and seized hold of her hair. Lord bless you, young man! my poor wife in the hands of Gray Moll was nothing better than a pigeon in the claws of a buzzard hawk or I in the hands of the Flaming Tinman

which when I saw my heart was fit to burst, and I determined to give up everything—everything to save my poor wife out of Gray Moll's claws. "Hold!" I shouted, "Hold, both of you—Jack, Moll. Hold, both of you, for God's sake, and I'll do what you will—give up trade, and business connection, bread, and everything, never more travel the roads, and go down on my knees to you in the bargain." Well, this had some effect: Moll let go my wife, and the Blazing Tinman stopped for a moment; it was only for a moment, however, that he left off—all of a sudden he hit me a blow which sent me against a tree; and what did the villain then? why, the flying villain seized me by the throat, and almost throttled me, roaring—what do you think, young man, that the flaming villain roared out?

Myself. I really don't know—something horrible, I suppose.

Tinker. Horrible, indeed; you may well say horrible, young man; neither more nor less than the Bible—"a Bible, a Bible!" roared the Blazing Tinman; and he pressed my throat so hard against the tree that my senses began to dwaul away—"a Bible, a Bible!" still ringing in my ears. Now, young man, my poor wife is a Christian woman, and though she travels the roads, carries a Bible with her at the bottom of her sack, with which sometimes she teaches the children to read—it was the only thing she brought with her from the place of her kith and kin, save her own body and the clothes on her back; so my poor wife half distracted, runs to her sack, pulls out the Bible, and puts it into

the hand of the Blazing Timan, who then thrust the end of it into my mouth with such fury that it made my lips bleed, and broke short one of my teeth, which happened to be decayed. "Swear," said he, "swear, you mumping villain, take your Bible oath that you will quit and give up the beat altogether, or I'll——" and then the hard-hearted villain made me swear by the Bible, and my own damnation, half-throttled as I was—to—to—I can't go on——.

Myself. Take another draught—stout liquor——

Tinker. I can't, young man, my heart's too full, and what's more, the pitcher is empty.

Myself. And so he swore you, I suppose, on the Bible, to quit the roads?

Tinker. You are right, he did so, the gipsy villain.

Myself. Gipsy! Is he a gipsy?

Tinker. Not exactly; what they call a half and half. His father was a gipsy, and his mother, like mine, one who walked the roads.

Myself. Is he of the Smiths—the Petulengres?

Tinker. I say, young man, you know a thing or two; one would think, to hear you talk, you had been bred upon the roads. I thought none but those bred upon the roads knew anything of that name—Petulengres! No, not he, he fights the Petulengres whenever he meets them; he likes nobody but himself, and wants to be

king of the roads. I believe he is a Boss, or a——; at any rate, he's a bad one, as I know to my cost.

Myself. And what are you going to do ?

Tinker. Do ! you may well ask that ; I don't know what to do. My poor wife and I have been talking of that all the morning over that half-pint mug of beer ; we can't determine on what's to be done. All we know is that we must quit the roads. The villain swore that the next time he saw us on the roads he'd cut all our throats and seize our horse and bit of a cart that are now standing out there under the tree.

Myself. And what do you mean to do with your horse and cart ?

Tinker. Another question ! What shall we do with our cart and pony ? they are of no use to us now. Stay on the roads I will not, both for my oath's sake and my own. If we had a trifle of money we were thinking of going to Bristol, where I might get up a little business, but we have none ; our last three farthings we spent about the mug of beer.

Myself. But why don't you sell your horse and cart ?

Tinker. Sell them ! And who would buy them unless someone who wished to set up in my line ; but there's no beat, and what's the use of the horse and cart and the few tools without the beat.

Myself. I'm half inclined to buy your cart and pony and your beat too.

Tinker. You! How came you to think of such a thing?

Myself. Why, like yourself, I hardly know what to do. I want a home and work. As for a home, I suppose I can contrive to make a home out of your tent and cart; and as for work I must learn to be a tinker; it would not be hard for one of my trade to learn to tinker; what better can I do? Would you have me go to Chester and work there now? I don't like the thoughts of it. If I go to Chester and work there I can't be my own man; I must work under a master, and perhaps he and I should quarrel, and when I quarrel I am apt to hit folks, and those that hit folks are sometimes sent to prison. I don't like the thought of either going to Chester or to Chester prison. What do you think I could earn at Chester?

Tinker. A matter of eleven shillings a week if anybody would employ you, which I don't think they would with those hands of yours. But whether they would or not, if you are of a quarrelsome nature, you must not go to Chester; you would be in the castle in no time. I don't know how to advise you. As for selling you my stock, I'd see you farther first, for your own sake.

Myself. Why?

Tinker. Why! you would get your head knocked off. Suppose you were to meet him?

Myself. Pooh! don't be afraid on my account: if I were to meet him I could easily manage him one way or other. I know all kinds of strange words and names, and, as I told you

before, I sometimes hit people when they put me out.

Here the tinker's wife, who for some minutes past had been listening attentively to our discourse, interposed, saying, in a low, soft tone ; "I really don't see, John, why you shouldn't sell the young man the things, seeing that he wishes for them, and is so confident ; you have told him plainly how matters stand, and if anything ill should befall him people couldn't lay the blame on you ; but I don't think any ill will befall him, and who knows but God has sent him to our assistance in time of need."

"I'll hear of no such thing," said the tinker ; "I have drunk at the young man's expense, and though he says he's quarrelsome I would not wish to sit in pleasanter company. A pretty fellow I should be now if I were to let him follow his own will. If he once sets up on my beat he's a lost man, his ribs will be stove in and his head knocked off his shoulders. There, you are crying, but you sha'n't have your will, though ; I won't be the young man's destruction—if, indeed, I thought he could manage the tinker—but he never can ; he says he can hit, but it's no use hitting the tinker. Crying still ! you are enough to drive one mad. I say, young man, I believe you understand a thing or two. Just now you were talking of knowing hard words and names—I don't wish to send you to your mischief—you say you know hard words and names ; let us see. Only on one condition I'll sell you the pony and things ; as for the beat, it's gone, isn't mine—

sworn away by my own mouth. Tell me what's my name ; if you can't, may I——"

Myself. Don't swear, it's a bad habit, neither pleasant nor profitable. Your name is Slingsby——Jack Slingsby. There, don't stare, there's nothing in my telling you your name ; I've been in these parts before, at least not very far from here. Ten years ago, when I was little more than a child, I was about twenty miles from here in a post chaise, at the door of an inn, and as I looked from the window of the chaise, I saw you standing by a gutter with a big tin ladle in your hand, and somebody called you Jack Slingsby. I never forget anything I hear or see ; I can't, I wish I could. So there's nothing strange in my knowing your name ; indeed, there's nothing strange in anything, provided you examine it to the bottom. Now what am I to give you for the things ?

I paid Slingsby five pounds ten shillings for his stock in trade, cart, and pony——purchased sundry provisions of the landlady, also a wagoner's frock, which had belonged to a certain son of hers, deceased, gave my little animal a feed of corn, and prepared to depart.

"God bless you, young man," said Slingsby, shaking me by the hand, "you are the best friend I've had for many a day ; I have but one thing to tell you——Don't cross that fellow's path if you can help it ; and stay——should the pony refuse to go, just touch him so, and he'll fly like the wind."

THE ITALIAN PRISONER.

CHARLES DICKENS.

The rising of the Italian people from under their unutterable wrongs, and the tardy burst of day upon them after the long, long night of oppression that has darkened their beautiful country, have naturally caused my mind to dwell often of late on my own small wanderings in Italy. Connected with them, is a curious little drama, in which the character I myself sustained was so very subordinate that I may relate its story without any fear of being suspected of self-display. It is strictly a true story.

I am newly arrived one summer evening, in a certain small town on the Mediterranean. I have had my dinner at the inn, and I and the mosquitoes are coming out into the streets together. It is far from Naples ; but a bright brown plump little woman-servant at the inn, is a Neapolitan, and is so vivaciously expert in pantomimic action, that in the single moment of answering my request to have a pair of shoes cleaned which I have left upstairs, she plies imaginary brushes, and goes completely through the motions of polishing the shoes up, and laying them at my feet. I smile at the brisk little woman in perfect satisfaction with her briskness ; and the brisk little woman, amiably pleased with me because I am pleased with her, claps her hands and laughs delightfully. We

are in the inn yard. As the little woman's bright eyes sparkle on the cigarette I am smoking, I make bold to offer her one ; she accepts it none the less merrily, because I touch a most charming little dimple in her fat cheek, with its light paper end. Glancing up at the many green lattices to assure herself that the mistress is not looking on, the little woman then puts her two little dimple arms a-kimbo, and stands on tiptoe to light her cigarette at mine. ' And now, dear little sir,' says she, puffing out smoke in a most innocent and cherubic manner, ' keep quite straight on, take the first to the right, and probably you will see him standing at his door.'

I have a commission to 'him,' and I have been inquiring about him. I have carried the commission about Italy several months. Before I left England, there came to me one night a certain generous and gentle English nobleman (he is dead in these days when I relate the story, and exiles have lost their best British friend), with this request : ' Whenever you come to such a town, will you seek out one Giovanni Carlavero, who keeps a little wine-shop there, mention my name to him suddenly, and observe how it affects him ?' I accepted the trust, and am on my way to discharge it.

The sirocco has been blowing all day, and it is a hot unwholesome evening with no cool sea-breeze. Mosquitoes and fire-flies are lively enough, but most other creatures are faint. The coquetish airs of pretty young women in the tiniest and wickedest of dolls' straw hats, who lean out at opened lattice blinds, are almost the only airs

stirring. Very ugly and haggard old women with distaffs, and with a grey tow upon them that looks as if they were spinning out their own hair (I suppose they were once pretty, too, but it is very difficult to believe so), sit on the footway leaning against house walls. Everybody who has come for water to the fountain, stays there, and seems incapable of any such energetic idea as going home. Vespers are over, though not so long but that I can smell the heavy resinous incense as I pass the church. No man seems to be at work, save the coppersmith. In an Italian town he is always at work, and always thumping in the deadliest manner.

I keep straight on, and come in due time to the first on the right : a narrow dull street, where I see a well-favoured man of good stature and military bearing, in a great cloak, standing at a door. Drawing nearer to this threshold, I see it is the threshold of a small wine-shop ; and I can just make out, in the dim light, the inscription that it is kept by Giovanni Carlavero.

I touch my hat to the figure in the cloak, and pass in, and draw a stool to a little table. The lamp (just such another as they dig out of Pompeii) is lighted, but the place is empty. The figure in the cloak has followed me in, and stands before me.

‘ The master ? ’

‘ At your service, sir.’

‘ Please to give me a glass of the wine of the country.’

He turns to a little counter, to get it. As his striking face is pale, and his action is evidently that of an enfeebled man, I remark that I fear he has been ill. It is not much, he courteously and gravely answers, though bad while it lasts: the fever.

As he sets the wine on the little table, to his manifest surprise I lay my hand on the back of his, look him in the face, and say in a low voice: 'I am an Englishman, and you are acquainted with a friend of mine. Do you recollect——?' and I mentioned the name of my generous countryman.

Instantly, he utters a loud cry, bursts into tears, and falls on his knees at my feet, clasping my legs in both his arms and bowing his head to the ground.

Some years ago, this man at my feet, whose overfraught heart is heaving as if it would burst from his breast, and whose tears are wet upon the dress I wear, was a galley-slave in the North of Italy. He was a political offender, having been concerned in the then last rising, and was sentenced to imprisonment for life. That he would have died in his chains, is certain, but for the circumstance that the Englishman happened to visit his prison.

It was one of the vile old prisons of Italy, and a part of it was below the waters of the harbour. The place of his confinement was an arched underground and underwater gallery, with a grill-gate at the entrance, through which it received such light and air as it got. Its condition was insufferably foul, and a stranger could hardly breathe in it, or see in it with the aid of a torch. At

the upper end of this dungeon, and consequently in the worst position, as being the furthest removed from light and air, the Englishman first beheld him, sitting on an iron bedstead to which he was chained by a heavy chain. His countenance impressed the Englishman as having nothing in common with the faces of the malefactors with whom he was associated, and he talked with him, and learnt how he came to be there.

When the Englishman emerged from the dreadful den into the light of day, he asked his conductor, the governor of the jail, why Giovanni Carlavero was put into the worst place ?

‘ Because he is particularly recommended,’ was the stringent answer.

‘ Recommended, that is to say, for death ?’

‘ Excuse me ; particularly recommended,’ was again the answer.

‘ He has a bad tumour in his neck, no doubt occasioned by the hardship of his miserable life. If he continues to be neglected, and he remains where he is, it will kill him.’

‘ Excuse me, I can do nothing. He is particularly recommended.’

The Englishman was staying in that town, and he went to his home there ; but the figure of this man chained to the bedstead made it no home, and destroyed his rest and peace. He was an Englishman of an extraordinarily tender heart, and he could not bear the picture. He went back to the prison grate ; went back again and again, and talked to the man and cheered him. He used the utmost influence to get the man unchained

from the bedstead, were it only for ever so short a time in the day, and permitted to come to the grate. It took a long time, but the Englishman's station, personal character, and steadiness of purpose, wore out opposition so far, and that grace was at last accorded. Through the bars, when he could thus get light upon the tumour, the Englishman lanced it, and it did well, and healed. His strong interest in the prisoner had greatly increased by this time, and he formed the desperate resolution that he would exert his utmost self-devotion and use his utmost efforts, to get Carlavero pardoned.

If the prisoner had been a brigand and a murderer, if he had committed every non-political crime in the Newgate Calendar and out of it, nothing would have been easier than for a man of any court or priestly influence to obtain his release. As it was, nothing could have been more difficult. Italian authorities, and English authorities who had interest with them, alike assured the Englishman that his object was hopeless. He met with nothing but evasion, refusal and ridicule. His political prisoner became a joke in the place. It was especially observable that English Circumlocution, and English Society on its travels, were as humorous on the subject as Circumlocution and Society may be on any subject without loss of caste. But, the Englishman possessed (and proved it well in his life) a courage very uncommon among us: he had not the least fear of being considered a bore, in a good humane cause. So he went on persistently trying, and trying, and trying, to get Giovanni Carlavero out. That prisoner had been rigorously re-chained, after the

tumour operation, and it was not likely that his miserable life could last very long.

One day, when all the town knew about the Englishman and his political prisoner, there came to the Englishman a certain sprightly Italian Advocate of whom he had some knowledge ; and he made this strange proposal, ' Give me a hundred pounds to obtain Carlavero's release. I think I can get him a pardon, with that money. But I cannot tell you what I am going to do with the money nor must you ever ask me the question if I succeed, nor must you ever ask me for an account of the money if I fail.' The Englishman decided to hazard the hundred pounds. He did so, and heard not another word of the matter. For half a year and more, the Advocate made no sign, and never once ' took on ' in any way, to have the subject on his mind. The Englishman was then obliged to change his residence to another and more famous town in the North of Italy. He parted from the poor prisoner with a sorrowful heart, as from a doomed man for whom there was no release but Death.

The Englishman lived in his new place of abode another half-year and more, and had no tidings of the wretched prisoner. At length, one day, he received from the Advocate a cool concise mysterious note, to this effect : ' If you still wish to bestow that benefit upon the man in whom you were once interested, send me fifty pounds more, and I think it can be ensured.' Now, the Englishman had long settled in his mind that the Advocate was a heartless sharper, who had preyed upon his credulity and his interest in an unfortunate

sufferer. So, he sat down and wrote a dry answer, giving the Advocate to understand that he was wiser now than he had been formerly, and that no more money was extractable from his pocket.

He lived outside the city gates, some mile or two from the post-office, and was accustomed to walk into the city with his letters and post them himself. On a lovely spring day, when the sky was exquisitely blue, and the sea Divinely beautiful, he took his usual walk, carrying this letter to the Advocate in his pocket. As he went along, his gentle heart was much moved by the loveliness of the prospect, and by the thought of the slowly dying prisoner chained to the bedstead, for whom the universe had no delights. As he drew nearer and nearer to the city where he was to post the letter, he became very uneasy in his mind. He debated with himself, was it remotely possible, after all, that this sum of fifty pounds could restore the fellow-creature whom he pitied so much, and for whom he had striven so hard, to liberty? He was not a conventionally rich Englishman—very far from that—but, he had a spare fifty pounds at the banker's. He resolved to risk it. Without doubt, God has recompensed him for the resolution.

He went to the banker's, and got a bill for the amount, and enclosed it in a letter to the Advocate that I wish I could have seen. He simply told the Advocate that he was quite a poor man, and that he was sensible it might be a great weakness in him to part with so much money on the faith of so vague a communication; but, that there it was, and that he prayed the Advocate to make a

good use of it. If he did otherwise, no good could ever come of it, and it would lie heavy on his soul one day.

Within a week, the Englishman was sitting at his breakfast, when he heard some suppressed sounds of agitation on the staircase, and Giovanni Carlavero leaped into the room and fell upon his breast, a free man !

Conscious of having wronged the Advocate in his own thoughts, the Englishman wrote him an earnest and grateful letter, avowing the fact, and entreating him to confide by what means and through what agency he had succeeded so well. The Advocate returned for answer through the post, 'There are many things, as you know, in this Italy of ours, that are safest and best not even spoken of--far less written of. We may meet some day, and then I may tell you what you want to know ; not here, and now.' But, the two never did meet again. The Advocate was dead when the Englishman gave me my trust ; and how the man had been set free, remained as great a mystery to the Englishman, and to the man himself, as it was to me.

But, I knew this :—here was the man, this sultry night, on his knees at my feet, because I was the Englishman's friend ; here were his tears upon my dress ; here were his sobs choking his utterance ; here were his kisses on my hands, because they had touched the hands that had worked out his release. He had no need to tell me it would be happiness to him to die for his benefactor ; I doubt if I ever saw real, sterling, fervent gratitude of soul, before or since.

He was much watched and suspected, he said, and had had enough to do to keep himself out of trouble. This, and his not having prospered in his worldly affairs, had led to his having failed in his usual communications to the Englishman for—as I now remember the period—some two or three years. But, his prospects were brighter, and his wife who had been very ill had recovered, and his fever had left him, and he had bought a little vineyard, and would I carry to his benefactor the first of its wine? Ay, that I would (I told him with enthusiasm), and not a drop of it should be spilled or lost!

He had cautiously closed the door before speaking of himself, and had talked with such excess of emotion, and in a provincial Italian so difficult to understand, that I had more than once been obliged to stop him, and beg him to have compassion on me and be slower and calmer. By degrees he became so, and tranquilly walked back with me to the hotel. There, I sat down before I went to bed and wrote a faithful account of him to the Englishman: which I concluded by saying that I would bring the wine home, against any difficulties, every drop.

Early next morning, when I came out at the hotel door to pursue my journey, I found my friend waiting with one of those immense bottles in which the Italian peasants store their wine—a bottle holding some half-dozen gallons—bound round with basket-work for greater safety on the journey. I see him now, in the bright sunlight, tears of gratitude in his eyes, proudly inviting my attention to this corpulent bottle. (At the

street-corner hard by, two high-flavoured able-bodied monks—pretending to talk together, but keeping their four evil eyes upon us).

How the bottle had been got there, did not appear; but the difficulty of getting it into the ramshackle vetturino carriage in which I was departing, was so great, and it took up so much room when it was got in, that I elected to sit outside. The last I saw of Giovanni Carlavero was his running through the town by the side of the jingling wheels, clasping my hand as I stretched it down from the box, charging me with a thousand last loving and dutiful messages to his dear patron, and finally looking in at the bottle as it reposed inside, with an admiration of its honourable way of travelling that was beyond measure delightful.

And now, what disquiet of mind this dearly beloved and highly-treasured Bottle began to cost me, no man knows. It was my precious charge through a long tour, and for hundreds of miles, I never had it off my mind by day or by night. Over bad roads—and they were many—I clung to it with affectionate desperation. Up mountains, I looked in at it and saw it helplessly tilting over on its back with terror. At innumerable inn doors when the weather was bad, I was obliged to be put into my vehicle before the Bottle could be got in, and was obliged to have the Bottle lifted out before human aid could come near me. The Imp of the same name, except that his associations were all evil and these associations were all good, would have been a less troublesome travelling companion. I might have served Mr. Cruikshank

as a subject for a new illustration of the miseries of the Bottle. The National Temperance Society might have made a powerful Tract of me.

The suspicions that attached to this innocent Bottle, greatly aggravated my difficulties. It was like the apple pie in the child's book. Parma pouted at it, Modena mocked it, Tuscany tackled it, Naples nibbled it, Rome refused it, Austria accused it, Soldiers suspected it, Jesuits jobbed it. I composed a neat Oration, developing my inoffensive intentions in connexion with this Bottle, and delivered it in an infinity of guard-houses, at a multitude of town gates, and on every drawbridge, angle, and rampart, of a complete system of fortifications. Fifty times a day, I got down to harangue an infuriated soldiery about the Bottle. Through the filthy degradation of the abject and vile Roman States, I had as much difficulty in working my way with the Bottle, as if it had bottled up a complete system of heretical theology. In the Neapolitan country, where everybody was a spy, a soldier, a priest, or a lazzarone, the shameless beggars of all four denominations incessantly pounced on the Bottle and made it a pretext for extorting money from me. Quires—quires do I say ? Reams—of forms illegibly printed on whity-brown paper were filled up about the Bottle, and it was the subject of more stamping and sanding than I had ever seen before. In consequence of which haze of sand, perhaps, it was always irregular, and always latent with dismal penalties of going back or not going forward, which were only to be abated by the silver crossing of a base hand, poked shirtless out of a ragged uniform sleeve. Under all discouragements,

however, I stuck to my Bottle, and held firm to my resolution that every drop of its contents should reach the Bottle's destination.

The latter refinement cost me a separate heap of troubles on its own separate account. What corkscrews did I see the military power bring out against that Bottle ; what gimlets, spikes, divining rods, gauges, and unknown tests and instruments ! At some places, they persisted in declaring that the wine must not be passed, without being opened and tasted ; I, pleading to the contrary, used then to argue the question seated on the Bottle lest they should open it in spite of me. In the southern parts of Italy more violent shrieking, face-making, and gesticulating, greater vehemence of speech and countenance and action went on about that Bottle, than would attend fifty murders in a northern latitude. It raised important functionaries out of their beds, in the dead of night. I have known half-a-dozen military lanterns to disperse themselves at all points of a great sleeping Piazza, each lantern summoning some official creature to get up, put on his cocked-hat instantly, and come and stop the Bottle. It was characteristic that, while this innocent Bottle had such immense difficulty in getting from little town to town, Signor Mazzini and the fiery cross were traversing Italy from end to end.

Still, I stuck to my Bottle, like any fine old English gentleman all of the olden time. The more the Bottle was interfered with, the stauncher I became (if possible) in my first determination that my countryman should have it delivered to him intact, as the man whom he had so nobly restored

to life and liberty had delivered it to me. If ever I had been obstinate in my days—and I may have been, say, once or twice—I was obstinate about the Bottle. But, I made it a rule always to keep a pocket full of small coin at its service, and never to be out of temper in its cause. Thus, I and the Bottle made our way. Once we had a break-down; rather a bad break-down, on a steep high place with the sea below us, on a tempestuous evening when it blew great guns. We were driving four wild horses abreast, Southern fashion, and there was some little difficulty in stopping them. I was outside, and not thrown off; but no words can describe my feelings when I saw the Bottle—travelling inside, as usual—burst the door open, and roll obesely out into the road. A blessed Bottle with a charmed existence, he took no hurt, and we repaired damage, and went on triumphant.

A thousand representations were made to me that the Bottle must be left at this place, or that, and called for again. I never yielded to one of them, and never parted from the Bottle on any pretence, consideration, threat, or entreaty. I had no faith in any official receipt for the Bottle, and nothing would induce me to accept one. These unmanageable politics at last brought me and the Bottle, still triumphant, to Genoa. There, I took a tender and reluctant leave of him for a few weeks, and consigned him to a trusty English captain, to be conveyed to the Port of London by sea.

While the Bottle was on his voyage to England, I read the Shipping Intelligence as anxiously as if I

had been an underwriter. There was some stormy weather after I myself had got to England by way of Switzerland and France, and my mind greatly misgave me that the Bottle might be wrecked. At last to my great joy, I received notice of his safe arrival, and immediately went down to Saint Katharine's Docks, and found him in a state of honourable captivity in the Custom House.

The wine was mere vinegar when I set it down before the generous Englishman—probably it had been something like vinegar when I took it from Giovanni Carlavero—but not a drop of it was spilled or gone. And the Englishman told me, with much emotion in his face and voice, that he had never tasted wine that seemed to him so sweet and sound. And long afterwards, the Bottle graced his table. And the last time I saw him in this world that misses him, he took me aside in a crowd, to say, with his amiable smile : ‘ We were talking of you only to-day at dinner, and I wished you had been there, for I had some Claret up in Carlavero's Bottle.’

JAMES BOSWELL.

LYTTON STRACHEY.

It would be difficult to find a more shattering refutation of the lessons of cheap morality than the life of James Boswell. One of the most extraordinary successes in the history of civilization was achieved by an idler, a lecher, a drunkard, and a snob. Nor was this success of that sudden explosive kind which is frequent enough with youthful genius—the inspired efflorescence of a Rimbaud or a Swinburne; it was essentially the product of long years of accumulated energy; it was the supreme expression of an entire life. Boswell triumphed by dint of abandoning himself, through fifty years, to his instincts. The example, no doubt, is not one to be followed rashly. Self-indulgence is common, and Boswells are rare. The precise character of the rarity we are now able, for the first time, to estimate with something like completeness. Boswell's nature and inner history cannot be fully understood from the works published by himself. It is only in his letters that the whole man is revealed. Professor Tinker, by collecting together Boswell's correspondence and editing it with scholarly exactitude, has done a great service to English literature.* There is in fact, only one fault to be found with this admirable book. Professor Tinker shows us more of

* "Letters of James Boswell." Collected and edited by Chauncey Brewster Tinker. 2 Vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press).

Boswell than any previous editor, but he does not show us all that he might. Like the editors of Walpole's Letters and Pepys's Diary, while giving himself credit for rehabilitating the text of his author, he admits in the same breath that he has mutilated it. When will this silly and barbarous prudery come to an end?

Boswell's career was completely dominated by his innate characteristics. Where they came from it is impossible to guess. He was the strangest sport: the descendant of Scotch barons and country gentlemen, the son of a sharp lowland lawyer, was an artist, a spend-thrift, a buffoon, with a passion for literature, and without any dignity whatever. So he was born, and so he remained; life taught him nothing—he had nothing to learn; his course was marked out, immutably, from the beginning. At the age of twenty-three he discovered Dr. Johnson. A year later he was writing to him, at Wittenberg, "from the tomb of Melancthon": "My paper rests upon the gravestone of that great and good man. . . At this tomb, then, my ever dear and respected friend! I vow to thee an eternal attachment." The rest of Boswell's existence was the history of that vow's accomplishment. But his connection with Dr. Johnson was itself only the crowning instance of an overwhelming predisposition, which showed itself in a multitude of varied forms. There were other great men, for instance—there was Mr. Wilkes, and General Paoli, and Sir David Dalrymple. One of Professor Tinker's most delightful discoveries is a series of letters from the youthful Boswell to Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in which all the writer's most persistent qualities—

his literary skill, his psychological perspicacity, his passion for personalities, and his amazing aptitude for self-revelation—are exquisitely displayed. “Dites-moi,” he asked the misanthropic sentimentalist, “ne ferai-je bien de m’appliquer véritablement à la musique, jusques à un certain point ? Dites-moi quel doit être mon instrument. C’est tard je l’avoue. Mais n’aurai-je le plaisir de faire un progrès continu, et ne serai-je pas capable d’adoucir ma vieillesse par les sons de ma lyre ?” Rousseau was completely melted. The elder Pitt, however, was made of sterner stuff. When Boswell appeared before him in the costume of a Corsican chieftain, “Lord Chatham, we are told, “smiled, but received him very graciously in his Pompous manner”—and there the acquaintance ended ; in spite of Boswell’s modest suggestion that the Prime Minister should “honour me now and then with a letter....To correspond with a Paoli and with a Chatham is enough to keep a young man ever ardent in the pursuit of virtuous fame.”

Fame—though perhaps it was hardly virtuous—Boswell certainly attained ; but his ardent pursuit of it followed the track of an extraordinary zigzag which could never have had anything in common with letters from Lord Chatham. His own letters to his friend Temple lay bare the whole unique peregrination, from start to finish. To confess is the desire of many ; but it is within the power of few. A rare clarity of vision, a still rarer candour of expression—without these qualities it is vain for a man to seek to unburden his heart. Boswell possessed them in the highest degree ; and, at the same time, he was untroubled

by certain other qualities, which, admirable though they be in other connections, are fatal for this particular purpose. He had no pride, no shame and no dignity. The result was that a multitude of inhibitions passed him by. Nevertheless he was by no means detached. His was not the method of the scientific observer, noting his introspections with a cold exactness—far from it; he was intimately fascinated by everything to do with himself—his thoughts, his feelings, his reactions; and yet he was able to give expression to them all with absolute ingenuousness, without a shade of self-consciousness, without a particle of reserve. Naturally enough the picture presented in such circumstances is full of absurdities, for no character which had suppressed its absurdities could possibly depict itself so. Boswell was *ex hypothesi* absurd; it was his absurdity that was the essential condition of his consummate art.

It was in the description of his love affairs that this truly marvellous capacity found its fullest scope. The succession of his passions, with all their details, their variations, their agitations, and their preposterousnesses, fill the letters to Temple (a quiet clergyman in the depths of Devonshire) with a constant effervescence of delight. One progresses with wonderful exhilaration from Miss W—t (“just such a young lady as I could wish for the partner of my soul”) to Zelide (“upon my soul, Temple, I must have her”), and so to the Signora, and the Moffat woman (“can I do better than keep a dear infidel for my hours of Paphian bliss?”), and the Princess (“here every flower is united”), and the gardener’s daughter, and Mrs. D., and Miss Bosville, and La

Belle Irlandaise ("just sixteen, formed like a Grecian nymph, with the sweetest countenance, full of sensibility, accomplished, with a Dublin education"), and Mrs. Boswell ("I am fully sensible of my happiness in being married to so excellent a woman"), and Miss Silvertown ("in the fly with me, an amiable creature who has been in France. I can unite little fondnesses with perfect conjugal love"), and Miss Bagnal ('*a Ranelagh girl*, but of excellent principles, in so much that she reads prayers to the servants in her father's family, every Sunday evening. 'Let me see such a woman,' cried I') and Miss Milles ("d'une certaine âge, and with a fortune of £ 10,000"), and—but the catalogue is endless. These are the pages which record the sunny hours of Boswell's chequered day. Light and warmth sparkle from them; but, even in the noon of his happiness, there were sudden clouds. Hypochondria seized him; he would wake in the night "dreading annihilation, or being thrown into some horrible state of being." His conscience would not leave him alone; he was attacked by disgraceful illnesses; he felt "like a man ordered for ignominious execution"; he feared that his infidelities to Mrs. Boswell would not be excused hereafter. And then his vital spirits rushed to his rescue, and the shadow fled. Was he not the friend of Paoli? Indeed he was; and he was sitting in a library forty feet long, dressed in green and gold. The future was radiant. "My warm imagination looks forward with great complacency on the sobriety, the healthfulness, and the worth of my future life." As for his infidelities, were they so reprehensible after all? "Concubinage is almost universal. If

it was *morally* wrong, why was it permitted to the pious men under the Old Testament. Why did not our Saviour never say a word against it ? ”

As his life went on, however, the clouds grew thicker and more menacing, and the end was storm and darkness. The climax came with the death of his wife. Boswell found himself at the age of fifty alone in the world with embarrassed fortunes, a family of young children to bring up, and no sign that any of the “towering hopes” of his youth had been realized. Worse still, he had become by this time a confirmed drunkard. His self-reproaches were pitiable ; his efforts at amendment never ceased ; he took a vow of sobriety under “a venerable yew” ; he swore a solemn oath that he would give up drinking altogether —that he would limit himself to four glasses of wine at dinner and a pint afterwards ; but it was all in vain. His way of life grew more and more disorderly, humiliating, and miserable. If he had retired to Scotland, and lived economically on his estate, he might have retrieved his position ; but that was what he could not do ; he could not be out of London. His ambitions seemed to multiply with his misfortunes. He exchanged the Scotch bar for the English, and lost all his professional income at a blow. He had wild hopes of becoming a Member of Parliament, if only he toadied Lord Lonsdale sufficiently ; and Lord Lonsdale promised much, asked him to his castle, made a butt of him, hid his wig, was gravely concerned, and finally threw him off after “expressing himself in the most degrading manner in presence of a low man from Carlisle and one of his menial servants.” Consolations now were

few indeed. It was something, no doubt, to be able to go to Court. "I was the *great man* at the late drawing-room in a suit of imperial blue lined with rose-coloured silk, and ornamented with rich gold-wrought buttons. What a motley scene is life!" And at Eton, where he was "carried to dine at the Fellows' table," it was pleasant enough to find that in spite of a Scotch education he could still make a creditable figure. "I had my classical quotations very ready." But these were fleeting gleams. "Your kindness to me," he burst out to Temple, in April, 1791, "fairly makes me shed tears. Alas, I fear that my constitutional melancholy, which returns in such dismal fits and is now aggravated by the loss of my valuable wife, must prevent me from any permanent felicity in this life. I snatch *gratifications*; but have no *comfort*, at least very little. . . . I get bad rest in the night, and then I brood over all my complaints—the *sickly mind* which I have had from my early years—the disappointment of my hopes of success in life—the irrevocable separation between me and that excellent woman who was my cousin, my friend, and my wife—the embarrassment of my affairs—the disadvantage to my children in having so wretched a father—nay, the want of *absolute certainty* of being happy after death, the *sure prospect* of which is *frightful*. No more of this."

The tragedy was closing; but it was only superficially a sordid one. Six weeks later the writer of these lines published, in two volumes quarto, the *Life of Dr. Johnson*. In reality, Boswell's spirit had never failed. With incredible persistence he had carried through the enormous

task which he had set himself thirty years earlier. Everything else was gone. He was burnt down to the wick, but his work was there. It was the work of one whose appetite for life was insatiable—so insatiable that it proved in the end self-destructive. The same force which produced the *Life of Johnson* plunged its author into ruin and desperation. If Boswell had been capable of retiring to the country and economizing we should never have heard of him. It was Lord Lonsdale's butt who reached immortality.

EDWARD GIBBON.

LYTTON STRACHEY.

Happiness is the word that immediately rises to the mind at the thought of Edward Gibbon : and happiness in its widest connotation—including good fortune as well as enjoyment. Good fortune, indeed, followed him from the cradle to the grave in the most tactful way possible ; occasionally it appeared to fail him ; but its absence always turned out to be a blessing in disguise. Out of a family of seven he alone had the luck to survive—but only with difficulty ; and the maladies of his childhood opened his mind to the pleasures of study and literature. His mother died ; but her place was taken by a devoted aunt, whose care brought him through the dangerous years of adolescence to a vigorous manhood. His misadventures at Oxford saved him from becoming a don. His exile to Lausanne, by giving him command of the French language, initiated him into European culture, and at the same time enabled him to lay the foundations of his scholarship. His father married again ; but his step-mother remained childless and became one of his dearest friends. He fell in love ; the match was forbidden ; and he escaped the dubious joys of domestic life with the future Madame Necker. While he was allowed to travel on the Continent, it seemed doubtful for some time whether his father would have the resources or the generosity to

send him over the Alps into Italy. His fate hung in the balance ; but at last his father produced the necessary five hundred pounds and, in the autumn of 1764, Rome saw her historian. His father died at exactly the right moment, and left him exactly the right amount of money. At the age of thirty-three Gibbon found himself his own master, with a fortune just sufficient to support him as an English gentleman of leisure and fashion. For ten years he lived in London, a member of Parliament, a placeman, and a diner-out, and during those ten years he produced the first three volumes of his History. After that he lost his place, failed to obtain another, and, finding his income unequal to his expenses, returned to Lausanne, where he took up his residence in the house of a friend, over-looking the Lake of Geneva. It was the final step in his career, and no less fortunate than all the others. In Lausanne he was rich once more, he was famous, he enjoyed a delightful combination of retirement and society. Before another ten years were out he had completed his History ; and in ease, dignity, and absolute satisfaction his work in this world was accomplished.

One sees in such a life an epitome of the blessings of the eighteenth century—the wonderful *μηδεν αγαπ* of that most balmy time—the rich fruit ripening slowly on the sun-warmed wall, and coming inevitably to its delicious perfection. It is difficult to imagine, at any other period in history, such a combination of varied qualities, so beautifully balanced—the profound scholar who was also a brilliant man of the world—the votary of cosmopolitan culture, who never for a moment ceased to be a supremely English

“character.” The ten years of Gibbon’s life in London afford an astonishing spectacle of interacting energies. By what strange power did he succeed in producing a masterpiece of enormous erudition and perfect form, while he was leading the gay life of a man about town, spending his evenings at White’s or Boodle’s or the Club, attending Parliament, oscillating between his house in Bentinck Street, his country cottage at Hampton Court, and his little establishment at Brighton, spending his summers in Bath or Paris, and even, at odd moments, doing a little work at the Board of Trade, to show that his place was not entirely a sinecure? Such a triumph could only have been achieved by the sweet reasonableness of the eighteenth century. “Monsieur Gibbon n’est point mon homme,” said Rousseau. Decidedly! The prophet of the coming age of sentiment and romance could have nothing in common with such a nature. It was not that the historian was a mere frigid observer of the golden mean—far from it. He was full of fire and feeling. His youth had been at moments riotous—night after night he had reeled hallooing down St. James’s Street. Old age did not diminish the natural warmth of his affections; the beautiful letter—a model of its kind—written on the death of his aunt, in his fiftieth year, is a proof of it. But the fire and the feeling were controlled and coördinated. Boswell was a Rousseau-ite, one of the first of the Romantics, an inveterate sentimentalist, and nothing could be more complete than the contrast between his career and Gibbon’s. He, too, achieved a glorious triumph; but it was by dint of the sheer force of native genius asserting

itself over the extravagance and disorder of an agitated life—a life which, after a desperate struggle, seemed to end at last in darkness and shipwreck. With Gibbon there was never any struggle: everything came naturally to him—learning and dissipation, industry and indolence, affection and scepticism—in the correct proportions; and he enjoyed himself up to the very end. .

To complete the picture one must notice another antithesis: the wit, the genius, the massive intellect, were housed in a physical mould that was ridiculous. A little figure, extraordinarily rotund, met the eye, surmounted by a top-heavy head, with a button nose, planted amid a vast expanse of cheek and ear, and chin upon chin rolling downward. Nor was this appearance only; the odd shape reflected something in the inner man. Mr. Gibbon, it was noticed, was always slightly over-dressed; his favourite wear was flowered velvet. He was a little vain, a little pompous; at the first moment one almost laughed; then one forgot everything under the fascination of that even flow of admirably intelligent, exquisitely turned, and most amusing sentences. Among all his other merits this obviously ludicrous egotism took its place. The astonishing creature was able to make a virtue even of absurdity. Without that touch of nature he would have run the risk of being too much of a good thing; as it was there was no such danger; he was preposterous and a human being.

It is not difficult to envisage the character and the figure; what seems strange, and remote, and

hard to grasp is the connection between this individual and the decline and fall of the Roman Empire. The paradox, indeed, is so complete as to be almost romantic. At a given moment—October 15, 1764—at a given place—the Capitoline Hill, outside the church of Aracoeli—the impact occurred between the serried centuries of Rome and Edward Gibbon. His life, his work, his fame, his place in the history of civilization, followed from that circumstance. The point of his achievement lay precisely in the extreme improbability of it. The utter incongruity of those combining elements produced the masterpiece—the gigantic ruin of Europe through a thousand years, mirrored in the mind of an eighteenth-century English gentleman.

How was the miracle accomplished? Needless to say, Gibbon was a great artist—one of those rare spirits, with whom a vital and penetrating imagination and a supreme capacity for general conceptions express themselves instinctively in an appropriate form. That the question has ever been not only asked but seriously debated, whether History was an art, is certainly one of the curiosities of human ineptitude. What else can it possibly be? It is obvious that History is not a science: it is obvious that History is not the accumulation of facts, but the relation of them. Only the pedantry of incomplete academic persons could have given birth to such a monstrous supposition. Facts relating to the past, when they are collected without art, are compilations; and compilations, no doubt, may be useful; but they are no more History than butter, eggs, salt and herbs are an omelette. That Gibbon was a great artist, therefore, is implied in the statement that he was a

great historian ; but what is interesting is the particular nature of his artistry. His whole genius was pre-eminently classical ; order, lucidity, balance, precision—the great classical qualities—dominate his work ; and his History is chiefly remarkable as one of the supreme monuments of Classic Art in European literature.

“ L'ordre est ce qu'il y a de plus rare dans les opérations de l'esprit.” Gibbon's work is a magnificent illustration of the splendid dictum of Fénelon. He brought order out of the enormous chaos of his subject—a truly stupendous achievement ! With characteristic good fortune, indeed, the material with which he had to cope was still just not too voluminous to be digested by a single extremely competent mind. In the following century even a Gibbon would have collapsed under the accumulated mass of knowledge at his disposal. As it was, by dint of a superb constructive vision, a serene self-confidence, a very acute judgement, and an astonishing facility in the manipulation of material, he was able to dominate the known facts. To dominate, nothing more ; anything else would have been foreign to his purpose. He was a classicist ; and his object was not comprehension but illumination. He drove a straight, firm road through the vast unexplored forest of Roman history ; his readers could follow with easy pleasure along the wonderful way, they might glance, as far as their eyes could reach, into the entangled recesses on either side of them ; but they were not invited to stop, or wander, or camp out, or make friends with the natives ; they must be content to look and to pass on.

It is clear that Gibbon's central problem was the one of exclusion: how much, and what, was he to leave out? This was largely a question of scale—always one of the major difficulties in literary composition—and it appears from several passages in the *Autobiographies* that Gibbon paid particular attention to it. Incidentally, it may be observed that the six *Autobiographies* were not so much excursions in egotism,—though no doubt it is true that Gibbon was not without a certain fondness for what he himself called “the most disgusting of the pronouns”—as exercises on the theme of scale. Every variety of compression and expansion is visible among those remarkable pages; but apparently, since the manuscripts were left in an unfinished state, Gibbon still felt, after the sixth attempt, that he had not discovered the right solution. Even with the scale of the *History* he was not altogether satisfied; the chapters on Christianity, he thought, might, with further labour, have been considerably reduced. But, even more fundamental than the element of scale, there was something else that, in reality, conditioned the whole treatment of his material, the whole scope and nature of his *History*; and that was the style in which it was written. The style once fixed, everything else followed. Gibbon was well aware of this. He wrote his first chapter three times over, his second and third twice; then at last he was satisfied, and after that he wrote on without a hitch. In particular the problem of exclusion was solved. Gibbon's style is probably the most exclusive in literature. By its very nature it bars out a great multitude of human energies. It

makes sympathy impossible, it takes no cognizance of passion, it turns it back upon religion with a withering smile. But that was just what was wanted. Classic beauty came instead. By the penetrating influence of style—automatically, inevitably—lucidity, balance and precision were everywhere introduced; and the miracle of order was established over the chaos of a thousand years.

Of course, the Romantics raised a protest. "Gibbon's style," said Coleridge, "is detestable; but," he added, "it is not the worst thing about him." Critics of the later nineteenth century were less consistent. They admired Gibbon for everything except his style, imagining that his *History* would have been much improved if it had been written in some other way; they did not see that, if it had been written in any other way, it would have ceased to exist; just as St. Paul's would cease to exist if it were rebuilt in Gothic. Obsessed by the colour and movement of romantic prose, they were blind to the subtlety, the clarity, the continuous strength of Gibbon's writing. Gibbon could turn a bold phrase with the best of them—"the fat slumbers of the Church," for instance—if he wanted to; but he very rarely wanted to; such effects would have disturbed the easy, close-knit, homogeneous surface of his work. His use of words is, in fact, extremely delicate. When, describing St. Simeon Stylites on his pillar, he speaks of "this last and lofty station," he succeeds, with the least possible emphasis, merely by the combination of those two alliterative epithets with that particular substantive, in making the whole affair ridiculous.

One can almost see his shoulders shrug. The nineteenth century found him pompous; they did not relish the irony beneath the pomp. He produces some of his most delightful effects by rhythm alone. In the *Vindication*—a work which deserves to be better known, for it shows us Gibbon, as one sees him nowhere else, really letting himself go—there is an admirable example of this. “I still think,” he says, in reply to a criticism by Dr. Randolph, “I still think that an hundred Bishops, with Athanasius at their head, were as competent judges of the discipline of the fourth century, as even the Lady Margaret’s Professor of Divinity in the University of Oxford.” Gibbon’s irony, no doubt, is the salt of his work; but, like all irony, it is the product of style. It was not for nothing that he read through every year the *Lettres Provinciales* of Pascal. From this point of view it is interesting to compare him with Voltaire. The irony of the great Frenchman was a flashing sword—extreme, virulent, deadly—a terrific instrument of propaganda. Gibbon uses the weapon with far more delicacy; he carves his enemy “as a dish fit for the Gods”; his mocking is aloof, almost indifferent, and perhaps, in the long run, for that very reason, even more effective.

At every period of his life Gibbon is a pleasant thing to contemplate, but perhaps most pleasant of all in the closing weeks of it, during his last visit to England. He had hurried home from Lausanne to join his friend Lord Sheffield, whose wife had died suddenly, and who, he felt, was in need of his company. The journey was no small proof of his affectionate nature; old age was approaching; he was corpulent, gouty, and

accustomed to every comfort ; and the war of the French Revolution was raging in the districts through which he had to pass. But he did not hesitate, and after skirting the belligerent armies in his chaise, arrived safely in England. After visiting Lord Sheffield he proceeded to Bath, to stay with his stepmother. The amazing little figure, now almost spherical, bowled along the Bath Road in the highest state of exhilaration. " I am always," he told his friend, " so much delighted and improved with this union of ease and motion, that, were not the expense enormous, I would travel every year some hundred miles, more especially in England." Mrs. Gibbon, a very old lady, but still full of vitality, worshipped her stepson, and the two spent ten days together, talking, almost always tête-à-tête, for ten hours a day. Then the historian went off to Althorpe, where he spent a happy morning with Lord Spencer, looking at early editions of Cicero. And so back to London. In London a little trouble arose. A protuberance in the lower part of his person, which, owing to years of characteristic *insouciance*, had grown to extraordinary proportions, required attention ; an operation was necessary, but it went off well, and there seemed to be no danger. Once more Mr. Gibbon dined out. Once more he was seen, in his accustomed attitude, with advanced forefinger, addressing the company, and rapping his snuff box at the close of each particularly pointed phrase. But illness came on again—nothing very serious. The great man lay in bed discussing how much longer he would live—he was fifty-six—ten years, twelve years, or perhaps twenty. He ate some chicken and drank

three glasses of madeira. Life seemed almost as charming as usual. Next morning, getting out of bed for a necessary moment, "Je suis plus adroit," he said with his odd smile to his French valet. Back in bed again, he muttered something more, a little incoherently, lay back among the pillows, dozed, half-woke, dozed again and became unconscious—for ever.

CHARLES DICKENS.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

In considering Dickens as a Victorian, perhaps the first necessity is considering him as, a pre-Victorian. It is not so much a matter of dates as of derivations; it must be remembered, to begin with, that he is much less completely inside the period, much less covered at both ends by the conventions of the period, than many great men whom some would call more original, like Ruskin or Meredith or Browning. On this side, indeed, Dickens is outside the Victorian enclosure, not so much because he was original as because he was traditional. Though labelled Radical, where others were labelled Tory, he carries on a rank, rowdy, jolly tradition, of men falling off coaches, before the sons of Science and the Great Exhibition began to travel primly on rails—or grooves. He carries on the old English legend of the coarse and comic novels of Smollett and Fielding; and none the less because, under the gradual pressure of Victorianism, his work is still comic but no longer coarse. The sort of comicality that commonly went with coarseness is apparent enough, especially at the beginning; while many of the other Victorians seem to have grown up, not merely Victorian—but something that should rather be called Albertian. This is the first and

perhaps the frankest phase of Dickens ; and but for refinements that really started later than this phase, it might easily have been even more frank. It may or may not be right to call him a caricaturist. But certainly, considered as a caricaturist, he starts straight away out of the world of Gilray and Rowlandson ; a world widely different from that of Du Maurier or even Keene. We hardly feel any such direct heritage of the old comic writers even at the beginning of the other Victorian novelists ; because they are more completely Victorian. And before we come to the application of this fact to his fiction, it has some application even to his life. For circumstances started him almost unconsciously with a certain very ancient tradition, which for special reasons had become a very English tradition. It makes an immortal appearance in his first great masterpiece of *Pickwick* ; but it is connected also with something in his personal position as well as in his literary lineage. It is perhaps the simplest figure in which we can summarize his primary position both in life and letters. I will call it for convenience the great tradition of The Comic Servant. And though in special ways it had been softened by being Christian and emphasized by being English, it is a very venerable tradition, which works back to the position in antiquity of The Comic Slave.

To explain this, we may briefly allude to his life, though there is no space for his biography. He was born in Portsea, a part of Portsmouth, in 1812, but was soon removed to Chatham, around which neighbourhood his early life largely revolved. His father was an impecunious old party, whose occupation was often shadowy and what the hasty

will describe as shady. But he was the model of Micawber, and therefore must have had in him something great and good. He and his son later went to London, where they both became parliamentary reporters; but the son soon turned from reporting politics to reporting life. As a journalist he wrote under the name of "Boz," and certain sketches of his attracted attention; a friend and patron named Hogarth had a family of daughters, among whom he found first a wife and afterwards a friend; but his first great opportunity came with the offer to write a story round Seymour's sketches of the pranks of the Nimrod Club, which he managed to turn into the more famous Pickwick Club. The book was hugely popular, and ever afterwards he was busy, successful, laborious, inventive, excited, and exhausted until he died. *Oliver Twist*, which stands somewhat alone, was followed by a serial scheme of stories within a story called *Master Humphrey's Clock*, in which *Barnaby Rudge* and *The Old Curiosity Shop* both appeared. Later, at regular intervals, came *Nicholas Nickleby*, *Martin Chuzzlewit*, and *Dombey and Son*; and with the latter we reach and recognize a change in his mood and method; the frank farce begins to fade away, and the more subtle, sober, and realistic Dickens of later years develops. He reaches his most sincere moment in the semi-autobiographical *David Copperfield*; his most earnest social philosophy in *Hard Times*, with something of the same graver reforming spirit in *Bleak House*; and his most restrained and delicate artistic success in *Great Expectations*. *Little Dorrit* was something of an interlude; and then he gathered up into his last

complete book, *Our Mutual Friend*, all his growing knowledge of the realities of society, of the growth of plutocracy, and the peril now threatening the national tradition. His furious industry, combined with yet more devastating tours in America, to say nothing of the private tragedy that separated him from his wife, gave something gloomy and feverish to his end ; and he died in 1870, leaving unsolved other mysteries besides *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*.

It is rather symbolic that he died in that year of Prussian victory, which was the eclipse of Liberty throughout the world. For he had grown up with the growing Liberalism of England, and is perhaps the one great Englishman who consciously devoted himself to democracy as a feeling as well as a theory. He stands for all the hearty humanitarianism of that age at its best ; and yet there is a deeper and older element in him, which I have put first because it came first. I mean, what I have already called the tradition of The Comic Servant.

I mean, that if we call Dickens democratic, we must qualify it by saying that he is the derisive democrat rather than the dignified democrat. If he looks down on worldly rank, it is not from the severe status of the citizen of antiquity ; it is not even from the solid status of the peasant in any peasantry. It is rather with that inverted and comic contempt which looks down when it looks up. It derives, not so much from any levelling dogma that Jack is as good as his master, in the sense that he should have no master ; it derives rather from the old joke, found in many an old

legend, that Jack is better than his master ; that in the last scene the last are first and the first last. We could hardly summon the solemnity to say that Samuel Pickwick and Samuel Weller are two equal citizens ; if only because in some ways the servant is the superior. But the superiority is the superiority of a comic servant, not of a master or even a peasant proprietor ; superiority in wit and satire and cunning, but not superiority in status or seriousness or dignity. Now, despite the growth of more grave and ideal democratic views, this did long remain the real attitude of the real Dickens. He was, first of all, the poorer man making fun of the richer ; but instinctively using fun as his weapon, and not minding if in the process he seems merely the funny man. This was complicated afterwards, as will be noted later, by many less natural ambitions touching rhetoric and sentiment. But when Dickens is most like himself, he is most like Sam Weller, and least like Wat Tyler or William Tell. He is more really concerned to show that the tyrant is undignified than that the slave is dignified.

The point is that the comic Dickens existed before the tragic or melodramatic ; the comic was older than the tragic ; the comic was deeper than the tragic. It was partly because there was already a tradition of popular joviality rather than popular justice ; of riot rather than revolt. It was partly because Dickens as an individual had lived for a long time amid this laughter of the populace, before he began to think more seriously of that social ideal ; which is not merely the populace, but rather the people. Just as Sam Weller had run wild as a sort of guttersnipe,

before he became a gentleman's servant and something of a philosopher, so Dickens had been one of the old English crowd, from which a nameless voice cries, "Three cheers for the Mayor; and may he never desert the nail and saucepan business as 'e made 'is money by," long before he had ever dreamed of seeing the tragic vision of a French crowd, as in *The Tale of Two Cities*, through the visionary eyes of Carlyle. That is the real comparison between Dickens the humorist and Dickens the sentimentalist, the sociologist, the realist, the reformer, and all the many aspects that have been unfavourably or favourably compared with it. Not that his social criticism was bad, not even that his sentimentalism was always necessarily bad; but that his humour was the elder brother, more hardy, more mature, more expert and experienced, more genuine and more national and historic. For the English populace has lived on laughter—its substitute for religion, for property, and sometimes even for food.

We may say that in this matter there is a curious contrast to Scott. We may also say that in this matter Scott was really Scottish, and therefore the reverse of English. For the Scots, having a real religion of the people, have had a real dignity in the democracy. Nothing is more notable than this curious contradiction; that while Dickens called himself a Radical and really was a Democrat, and Scott called himself a Tory and really rejoiced in some qualities of the older aristocrat, Scott had a far nobler sense than Dickens of the natural human dignity of the poor. Small farmers or fishermen in Scott do not have to become comic servants in order to score off their

masters ; do not have to become Court fools in order to criticize the Court. They can be eloquent in plain words : they can be eloquent in poor man's speech ; they can be eloquent in broad Scots ; nobody doubts the sincerity of Dickens or the justification of Peggotty ; but they could not speak over the ruined hearth with the tongue of Meg Merrilees over the gipsy fires ; a speech that almost rises into song. Nationality is not a matter of praise or blame, for by its very nature a nation gives a colour to things both good and evil ; but it is important to realize that Dickens could no more have imagined Meg Merrilees than Scott could have invented Mrs. Wilfer.

Oddly enough, Dickens could only write good rhetoric when he meant it for bad rhetoric. When he himself seriously meant it for good rhetoric, it was generally bad. So completely was the comic spirit his spirit, almost in the sense of his soul, that anything he wrote with expansion and exaggeration was for him a liberation of the soul, and took on swelling contours of the comic, which really have their own beauty and even their own harmony. But when he was only making his serious characters dramatic, he often only made them melodramatic. When he was only stuffing the gaps of the mere story with serious matter, he was not enjoying himself so much ; and the stuffing was often poor stuff. His fools could talk poetry, while his knaves could only talk sentiment. Therefore, strange as it may seem, the one or two occasions on which Dickens may actually be said to be an English stylist, are those in which he is a satirist of what he considers a pompous and preposterous style. About as good

a piece of English as he ever wrote in his life is Mr. Serjeant Buzfuz's speech, which is really an uncommonly good speech. We can see the difference at once, when we compare it with the really pompous and preposterous speeches he was putting, almost at the same time, into the mouths of his serious villains. For instance, *Nicholas Nickleby* is an early work ; but *Pickwick* is even earlier. But the raving of Ralph Nickleby is not even good as raving ; while the ranting of Serjeant Buzfuz is very good as ranting ; nay, is classical and almost rational as ranting. Few, I imagine, who have had business interviews with a money-lender, or even a stingy uncle, have ever heard him conclude the conversation with the words, " My curse—my bitter curse upon you, boy ! " ; or formed a high opinion of his literary style if he did. But then Dickens was not enjoying himself in writing about Ralph ; and he was enjoying himself in writing about Buzfuz. Therefore, as I say, he so heartily enters into the real spirit of the old forensic eloquence, and so fills it with his own ecstasy of emphasis, that he really writes a piece of good style worthy of a great stylist. After describing darkly how " a being, erect upon two legs and bearing all the outward semblance of a man and not of a monster," entered Mrs. Bardell's lodging-house, he has the art and restraint to close the passage with simplicity and severity. " This man was Pickwick ; Pickwick the defendant." Then, by a true stylistic inspiration, he starts afresh, as with a new paragraph ; " Of this man Pickwick I will say little. The subject presents but few attractions ; and I, gentlemen, am not the man, nor are you, gentlemen, the men, to

delight in the contemplation of revolting heartlessness and systematic villainy." Which is, quite seriously, a rattling good piece of English rhetoric ; a thousand times better than anything Dickens could have written when he wanted to be serious.

It would be an exaggeration to say that this is because Dickens was not serious about being serious. But it is true to say that his whole soul was seldom in anything about which he was wholly serious. He was a man with much of the actor in him ; he was, in fact, an admirable amateur actor ; the real, sound, old-fashioned sort of actor, who was proud of versatility and the taking of varied parts. When he took the part of a rhetorician or a sentimentalist or a social idealist, he was sincere as an actor is sincere ; that is, as any other artist is sincere. He had something to say and he said it ; not always perfectly, but often very well. But when he was describing something funny, he was himself. He was not acting but enjoying ; he was almost the audience rather than the artist. There was something gigantic, as of the joy of a whole crowd in his enjoyment. He was essentially the man who laughs at his own jokes, and his own jokes inspired him like wine to wilder and wilder creation ; but always to the creation of beauty in his own department of the far-fetched and the fantastic. What is more to the purpose here, they could inspire him even in the department of the forensic or the classic. When he was giving us Buzfuz at his funniest, he could not help giving us Buzfuz at his best. Dickens does not record the speech of Mr. Serjeant Snubbin, the Counsel of Mr. Pickwick, who was equally eminent and doubtless equally eloquent. But then

Snubbin had the misfortune to be on the right side, and especially the reasonable side, and reasonableness would never have inspired such rhetoric. In Dickens it is the man who is entirely in the wrong who invariably says the right thing.

All the genius is in that saying of the right thing ; that is, of the exquisitely and ecstatically wrong thing. His fun is a form of poetry ; and quite as personal and indefinable as poetry. Like poetry, it is for the moment on one note, and making the most of one notion ; like poetry, it leaves us amazed at what can be made out of one notion. That is what the critics mean who say it is not like life ; because it is more living than life. It is a magic accelerating growth ; so that one seed out of a thousand seeds of fact visibly springs and sprouts into a tree, as in a fairy-tale. Certainly this is not dealing with all the facts ; but it is releasing all the potential life in one of them. Dickens saw something, whether in a man's notions or in his nose, which could be developed more than dull life dares to develop it. The Dickens comic character is in that sense real and in that sense unreal. We may call it a caricature ; though indeed it is a caricature of Dickens to call him a caricaturist. The very criticism itself has exactly the over-simplification of a caricature. But if anybody thinks that anybody can do it, that it is a vulgar trick of exaggerating anything, that it is not a work of art, that it is not a work of genius—then that critic may be curtly recommended to become a great comic novelist, and create a score of Dickens characters out of the next twenty people he meets. He will soon find that he can no more do it than he can

become a great poet merely by admiring the sunset. In this sense we may say that Dickens was really too subtle and distinguished ; and that is why it was easy to call him obvious and vulgar.

We may here recur to the fact first stated : that Dickens, who was in a family sense almost as new and nameless as a foundling, or at least almost as lonely as an orphan, had in a literary sense something like a pedigree. He called one of his sons Henry Fielding Dickens, and we instantly feel that he had a sort of natural right to make a godfather out of Henry Fielding ; more than he had, in that sense, to make one out of a pure Victorian like Alfred Tennyson. But the comic literature was not all great literature, nor its exponents all men like Fielding ; and there were two sides to the very broad farce prevailing before the time when the Tennysonian refinement finally prevailed. In some ways this crude comic tradition did him harm even then ; and in one particular way it does him even greater harm now. It is notable that he took over certain stock stage figures, of the farcical sort, and many modern readers are still repelled by a general impression that the story is stale, before they go on to discover that the story-telling is almost startlingly fresh. For instance, they feel that it is not very funny that Mr. Tupman was a fat man who dressed up as a dandy and a lady-killer. It is not very funny ; and for that reason Dickens really tells us very little more about Mr. Tupman. It marks the inspired inconsequence of his method, that the story of *Pickwick* is not chiefly the story of the *Pickwickians*. Dickens started with the stock characters, but he crowded the stage with superb

supers who have nothing to do with the play, and who are the making of it. By the end, the story is full of entirely new and original characters, and none more new than Mr. Samuel Pickwick ; who has somehow changed from a goggle-eyed old buffoon to a most mellow and well-mannered old English merchant. Nobody does justice to Dickens the creative artist who has a general prejudiced impression of Dickens the caricaturist. He actually began with a commission to write what were little more than captions for caricatures. The point is that while the caricatures remained stiff or vulgar, the new captions grew more and more inventive and imaginative. The test is not in the situations, but in the treatment of the situations. There must have been many tipsy clerks, in many comic novels, who roystered in their cups in the manner of robbers carousing. But only one of them, whose name was Richard Swiveller, when crying, "Some wine here, ho !" ever carried dramatic versatility so far as to hand the flagon to himself with profound humility and then receive it haughtily. There must have been many jokes about Valentine's Day as vulgar as the valentines ; but only in the Weller family was there that remarkable debate on diction, which decided whether "circumscribed" or "circumvented" is a more tender word. Many allusions less than delicate were made to Mrs. Gamp's profession but only one gave us a flashing glimpse of that distracted husband, and the invalid who was told "to ease 'er mind, 'is 'owls was organs."

Nevertheless, Dickens did gain something essential to his greatness from that old tradition

of England, and even from that relatively old tradition of revolution. I know not what it should be called ; if I had to invent a name for it I should call it The Great Gusto ; something whole-hearted and precipitate about the mirth and the anger of that age, when there were mobs and no ballot-boxes. When all is allowed for, the many noble names that are native to the Victorian time as such, and their several forms of sincerity or self-direction, it is true that the great force, or even the great violence of Dickens flows through them all, like an ancestral river coming from older places and more historic hills. He is all the more traditional because he is ignorant. He has that vast, silent, incessant traditionalism that we call the ignorance of the populace. And it is right to say that when more sophisticated Victorians set up fads like fences, and established new forms of narrowness, that flood of popular feeling, that was a single man, burst through them and swept on. He was a Radical, but he would not be a Manchester Radical, to please Mr. Gradgrind. He was a humanitarian, but he would not be a platform pacifist, to please Mr. Honeythunder. He was vaguely averse to ritual religion ; but he would not abolish Christmas, to please Mr. Scrooge. He was ignorant of religious history, and yet his religion was historic. For he was the People, that is heard so rarely in England ; and, if it had been heard more often, would not have suffered its feasts to be destroyed.

WILLIAM GILBERT GRACE.

NEVILLE CARDUS.

Amongst the eminent Victorians was W. G. Grace; he enjoyed the proper authority. The nation called him the G.O.M., and, like another monument called the same, he looked the part. There is a lot in "appearance" if the crowd is to give full respect and worship. W. G. Grace possessed physical size—and he was bewhiskered. I have seen faded photographs taken of Grace when he was under twenty years of age; the beard is already profuse and impressive. To catch the popular sense of dramatic fitness, Grace simply *had* to be big, for he stood for so much in the history of cricket at a time when hardly any other game challenged it as the national out-of-door sport and spectacle. Also there is another point which was to Grace's advantage in his character of a G.O.M.: he lived in a period which not only believed in great men but actually insisted on them and went about looking for them. And because there was no idea then of the trick of exploitation called nowadays publicity, a politician, actor, jockey, or a cricketer could remain at a romantic distance from the eyesight of the multitude: he did not get too familiar. Grace was a household possession, true, but only by reason of the performances he achieved day by day. Advertisement

did not give him a spurious reputation and wear out belief in him by damnable iteration. Off the cricket field he was concealed in suggestive anonymity, and if people saw him in the streets, they turned round and gazed and gaped, and were pleased if they could feel that no mistake had been done.

Astonishing that by means of a game of bat and ball, a man should have been able to stamp his shape and spirit on the imagination of thousands. As I say, no rhetorical Press pointed out his prowess incessantly. Not long ago I had cause to look through the files of an old newspaper in search of some bygone fact of cricket. I found a match at Lord's in which W. G. scored 152 not out; the game was reported in very small type with no headliness but this—in tiny print:

ANOTHER GOOD SCORE BY DR. GRACE

Grace got his renown during the years that did not know the literary persuasions of cricket writers who describe an innings by Hobbs in the rhetoric of a Macaulay; alone he conquered—with his bat and (this is certain) by his beard.

When I was a boy I lived in a family that did not interest itself in games. Yet often at breakfast W. G. Grace's name was mentioned. Everybody understood exactly who he was and what he signified in the diet of the day's news. From time to time, *Punch* used him as the subject for a cartoon; the Royal Family occasionally inquired after his health. When he was reported not out at Lord's at lunch, the London clubs emptied, and the

road to St. John's Wood all afternoon was tinkling with the old happy noise of the hansom cab. Sometimes he would play, at the height of his fame, in a country cricket match in some village in the West of England. And from far and wide the folk would come, on foot, in carriages, and homely gigs. On one of these occasions Grace had made a score of twenty or so when he played out at a ball and missed it. The local wicket-keeper snapped up the ball in his gloves triumphantly, and swept off the bails and—seeing visions of immortality—he screamed to the umpire : “ H'zat ! ”

The umpire said : “ Not out ; and look 'ee 'ere, young fellow, the crowd has come to see Doctor Grace and not any of your monkey-tricks.

I have always been amused that W. G. Grace became famous while the Victorians were endowing cricket with moral unction, changing the lusty game that Squire Osbaldeston knew into the most priggish of the lot, and stealing rigour, temper, and character from it. Cricket was approved at the private schools for the sons of gentlemen ; the detestable phrase, “ It isn't cricket,” was heard in the land. The game acquired a cant of its own, and you might well have asked why two umpires were necessary at all, and why the bowler ever appealed for leg-before-wicket. W. G. could not have contained his large humanity in any genteel pursuit ; he was of more than ordinary human bulk, and therefore he had more than ordinary frailty. He exercised his wits, went about the job of winning matches with gusto.

“ Did the old man ever cheat ? ” I once asked an honest Gloucestershire cricketer, who worshipped Grace.

“ Bless you, sir, never on your life,” was the quite indignant answer. “ Cheat ? No, sir, don’t you ever believe it—he were too clever for that.”

When Grace and Gloucestershire met Hornby and Lancashire, there was sport indeed. Grace had a habit of moving a fieldsman surreptitiously from the slips to fine leg, while the batsman was concentrating his vision on the next ball. Once on a time at Old Trafford, A. N. Hornby decided to hoist Grace with his own petard. So, even as Grace was standing with his left toe up from the ground, getting ready for a stroke while the bowler was running to the wicket—at that very moment A. N. Hornby quietly signalled to first slip, who on tiptoe moved towards the leg side behind Grace’s back. But he was not half-way there before W. G.’s high-pitched voice cried out : “ I can see what you’re doin’; I can see what you’re at ! ”

If a man is going to give his whole life to a game, let him play it like a *full* man, with no half measures and no repressions. Cricket was a battle of wits with Grace, first and last. His enormous technique was saved from mechanical chilliness because he never practised it without some artful end in view ; he larded the green earth wherever he played ; he dropped juicy flavours of sport ; he loved an advantage, and hated to be beaten.

In his long career, which lasted from 1863 to 1908, he scored more than 54,000 runs and took 2,664 wickets. I write down these statistics here to give some slight idea of his mastery over the two main technical departments of cricket. But one of the purposes of my essay has really no use for records, which mean nothing to folk who are not cricketers. I am trying to get Grace into the Victorian scene, to see him as a Representative Man, and also to see him in relation to the crowd that invented his legend. "Was he a fraud?" a young man at Oxford asked me not long ago. "I fancy there is a bit of the fraud in all the Victorians."

The question was, on the face of it, senseless : no charlatan can be a master and forge a lasting technique. There would have been no Hobbs if Grace had not extended the machinery of batsmanship and achieved a revolution in bowling by his great synthesis of offensive and defensive stroke-play.

The hint of the triumphant charlatan which comes to us when we read of Grace (just as the same hint comes to us when we read of Gladstone and Irving) arises from a habit of mind supposed to be peculiar to the Victorians. They rather lacked flippancy, and for that reason they appear to this flippant generation to have blown out fulsomely all the objects of their admiration ; they seized on the day's heroes, and invested them with the significance of a whole tradition. In an epoch of prosperity, when the idea of material expansion was worshipped for its own sake, even the vast runs made on a cricket field by W.G. Grace seemed

symbolical; his perpetual increase of authority and performance suited a current love and respect for size and prosperity. W. G. became an Institution in a day of Institutions, all of which, like the Albert Memorial, had to be impressive by sheer bulk. W. G. himself, of course, did not know what he stood for in the national consciousness; he was content to be a cricketer. He shared none of the contemporary modern habit of self-exposition.

To-day, even though we pretend to possess a humorous sense of proportion, all sorts of small persons regard themselves much too seriously, and are ready to submit to an "interpretation," psychological or scientific. I expect any moment a treatise by Bradman on "The Theory and Economy of Batsmanship." And I would not be surprised to hear, any Sunday evening, an address broadcast from St. Martin's by Jack Hobbs on "The Cricketer as an Ethical Influence," with some moving metaphors about "The Great Umpire" and "Playing the Game." W. G. Grace never lapsed into solemnity about himself. Once he was asked to explain the best way to stop an off-break. He did not let loose a cartload of theory, or drag in the blessed word "psychology." He simply said: "You must put your bat to the ball." Frequently I wonder whether the "Victorian age" has not been a consequence of the modern tendency to write "studies" of everything; and to turn irony against itself by too close a search for significant overtones. Grace, I am sure, would be the last person in the world to regard himself a theme for such a "study" as I am attempting now; I can see his great ghost stroking

the immortal beard, and saying: "Get on with the game." It will be as well for me to do so; let me keep myself henceforth to the man's cricket; there's a deal to be said on behalf of it.

To be first in the field in any activity is a good thing: there's so much room in the beginning; the earth is virgin, and admiration is eager and sensitive. If a Grace were born to-day, what would there be in cricket left for him to do?—and a man cannot express an original nature by moving along worn tracks, emulating and not creating. When Grace began to stamp his personality on English sport, cricket was scarcely established save as a rough-and-ready pastime on the village green. The technical elements of the game had yet to be gathered together; the counties had to be organized. A spectacular interest was wanting to attract the crowds; and the money was required to make a national game. W. G. came forward, at the ripe moment; the technique of cricket stood ready for expansion and masterly summary; the period was also ready for a game which everybody could watch, the gentry as well as the increasing population of town workers. Grace's skill as a batsman may be said to have orchestrated the simple folk-song of the game; his personality placed it on the country's stage.

He came from out of the West Country and though in time his empire stretched from Lord's to Melbourne, never did he forget the open air of Gloucestershire, and the flavours of his birthplace. In an orchard at the dawning of June days, he learned his cricket; yet in his prime, at the age

of forty-seven, he was still waking every summer morning fresh as a lad, eager for a match. If he knew that the other side were about to give a trial to a new bowler of awe-inspiring reputation, Grace would get up all the earlier, make haste to the field, and take a glance at the latest demon.

Once it happened that the Australians brought to England a bowler of unknown witchery; Grace straightway went to their captain, W. L. Murdoch, and he said: "And so you've found a good bowler, eh? What does he do with the ball? Is he a fast 'un, or slow?"

"Ah," was the sinister reply, "he mixes 'em."

"Very well, then," answered W. G., "I will have a look at him this afternoon; I'll have a look at him." And that afternoon he went in first with some old professional, whom we'll call Harry.

W. G. played a few overs from the new bowler most warily; the devil might have been in every ball, so carefully did Grace keep his bat down, and so suspiciously did his eyes sharpen. After a short time he hit the new bowler for two fours and a three off successive balls. And while the two batsmen were passing one another up and down the pitch, Grace's voice cried out, in immense glee: "Run up, Harry, run up! We'll mix 'em for him; we'll mix 'em!" Is it any wonder that the man's vital character made cricket seem part of the English way of life in summer-time, lusty and manly, yet artful and humorous? A great company of "originals" grew around the Old Man; Tom Emmett, A. N. Hornby, Crossland,

Barlow, Johnny Briggs—scores of them, all men of ripe comedy, home-spun and fresh, each of them as vivid as characters on a page of Dickens or Surtees.

Cricket is not the best game *as a game*. There is more excitement in Rugby football ; as much style and skill in tennis at Wimbledon ; a swifter and more certain decision in a cup-tie. But cricket is without a rival amongst open air pastimes for the exhibition of native characteristics in Englishmen. It is a leisurely game on the whole, and its slow movement enables the cricketers to display themselves. A lot of nonsense is talked about the “ team spirit ” in cricket ; but as a fact the greatest batsmen and bowlers and fieldsmen have been those who have stood out from the ruck and have taken charge of a situation in ways entirely their own. You could not merge into a drilled efficient mass the Johnsonian bulk of Grace, or the Figaro alacrity of a Macartney. In no other game than cricket does the result mean so little to true lovers of it. As the years pass by, and cricketers become old and sit by the fireside talking of the past, they do not remember matches won or lost, or the scores piled up, or the technical excellences seen on a hundred fields of play. No ; the memory is a sunlit scene, and all the heroes are deathless, because they somehow told the old tale of every man in his own humour, in this our land. W. G. Grace put his heart into the game, and perhaps it is that which keeps cricket alive to this day, despite many changes and vicissitudes.

At the present time, nearly all the performances of W. G. Grace have been surpassed by

cricketers here and there—some of whom will not be remembered a year after they have ceased playing the game. Hendren of Middlesex has scored more hundreds than W. G. Grace scored in his long career. Yet the fact of Grace's posterity remains to this moment: he is still the most widely known of all cricketers amongst folk who have seldom, if ever, seen a match. After all, he really did transcend the game; I have tried in this article not to treat him with less proportion than he would have treated himself. But I cannot, and nobody possibly could, contain the stature of the man within the scope of bat and ball. Nobody thinks of Grace in terms of the statistics recorded of his skill; like Dr. Johnson, he endures not by reason of his works but by reason of his circumferential humanity. I always think of him as the great enjoyer of life who, after he had batted and bowled and fielded throughout the whole three days of a match between Gloucestershire and Yorkshire, was at the end of the third afternoon seen running uphill from the ground, carrying his bag, in haste for the train to London—running with a crowd of cheering little boys after him, and his whiskers blowing out sideways in the breeze.

THE LITTLE BIRDS WHO WON'T SING.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

On my last morning on the Flemish coast, when I knew that in a few hours I should be in England, my eye fell upon one of the details of Gothic carving of which Flanders is full. I do not know whether the thing was old, though it was certainly knocked about and indecipherable, but at least it was certainly in the style and tradition of the early Middle Ages. It seemed to represent men bending themselves (not to say twisting themselves) to certain primary employments. Some seemed to be sailors tugging at ropes ; others, I think, were reaping ; others were energetically pouring something into something else. This is entirely characteristic of the pictures and carvings of the early thirteenth century, perhaps the most purely vigorous time in all history. The great Greeks preferred to carve their gods and heroes doing nothing. Splendid and philosophic as their composure is there is always about it something that marks the master of many slaves. But if there was one thing the early medievals liked it was representing people doing something—hunting or hawking, or rowing boats, or treading grapes, or making shoes, or cooking something in a pot. “*Quicquid agunt homines votum timor ira voluptas.*” (I quote from memory). The Middle Ages is full of that spirit in all its monuments and manuscripts. Chaucer retains it in his jolly

insistence on everybody's type of trade and toil. It was the earliest and youngest resurrection of Europe, the time when social order was strengthening, but had not yet become oppressive ; the time when religious faiths were strong, but had not yet been exasperated. For this reason the whole effect of Greek and Gothic carving is different. The figures in the Elgin marbles, though often rearing their steeds for an instant in the air, seem frozen for ever at that perfect instant. But a mass of medieval carving seems actually a sort of bustle or hubbub in stone. Sometimes one cannot help feeling that the groups actually move and mix, and the whole front of a great cathedral has the hum of a huge hive.

But about these particular figures there was a peculiarity of which I could not be sure. Those of them that had any heads had very curious heads, and it seemed to me that they had their mouths open. Whether or no this really meant anything or was an accident of nascent art I do not know ; but in the course of wondering I recalled to my mind the fact that singing was connected with many of the tasks there suggested, that there were songs for reapers reaping and songs for sailors hauling ropes. I was still thinking about this small problem when I walked along the pier at Ostend ; and I heard some sailors uttering a measured shout as they laboured, and I remembered that sailors still sing in chorus while they work, and even sing different songs according to what part of their work they are doing. And a little while afterwards, when my sea journey was

over, the sight of men working in the English fields reminded me again that there are still songs for harvest and for many agricultural routines. And I suddenly wondered why if this were so it should be quite unknown for any modern trade to have a ritual poetry. How did people come to chant rude poems while pulling certain ropes or gathering certain fruit, and why did nobody do anything of the kind while producing any of the modern things? Why is a modern newspaper never printed by people singing in chorus? Why do shopmen seldom, if ever, sing?

If reapers sing while reaping, why should not auditors sing while auditing and bankers while banking? If there are songs for all the separate things that have to be done in a boat, why are there not songs for all the separate things that have to be done in a bank? As the train from Dover flew through the Kentish gardens, I tried to write a few songs suitable for commercial gentlemen. Thus, the work of bank clerks when casting up columns might begin with a thundering chorus in praise of Simple Addition.

“Up my lads, and lift the ledgers, sleep and ease are o’er.

Hear the Stars of Morning shouting: ‘Two and Two are Four.’

Though the creeds and realms are reeling, though the sophists roar.

Though we weep and pawn our watches, Two and Two are four.”

And then, of course, we should need another song for times of financial crisis and courage, a

song with a more fierce and panic-stricken metre,
like the rushing of horses in the night—

“ There’s a run upon the Bank—

Stand away !

For the Manager’s a crank and the Secretary drank, and
the Upper Tooting Bank

Turns to bay !

Stand close : there is a run

On the Bank.

Of our ship, our royal one, let the ringing legend run,
that she fired with every gun

Ere she sank.”

And as I came into the cloud of London I met a friend of mine who actually is in a bank, and submitted these suggestions in rhyme to him for use among his colleagues. But he was not very hopeful about the matter. It was not (he assured me) that he underrated the verses, or in any sense lamented their lack of polish. No ; it was rather, he felt, an indefinable something in the very atmosphere of the society in which we live that makes it spiritually difficult to sing in banks. And I think he must be right ; though the matter is very mysterious. I may observe here that I think there must be some mistake in the calculations of the Socialists. They put down all our distress not to a moral tone, but to the chaos of private enterprise. Now, banks are private ; but post-offices are Socialistic : therefore I naturally expected that the post-office would fall into the collectivist idea of a chorus. Judge of my surprise when the lady in my local post-office (whom I urged to sing) dismissed the idea with far more

coldness than the bank clerk had done. She seemed, indeed, to be in a considerably greater state of depression than he. Should any one suppose that this was the effect of the verses themselves, it is only fair to say that the specimen verse of the Post-Office Hymn ran thus—

“ O’er London our letters are shaken like snow,
Our wires o’er the world like the thunderbolts go.
‘The news that may marry a maiden in Sark,
Or kill an old lady in Finsbury Park.’
Chorus (with a swing of joy and energy) :
“ Or kill an old lady in Finsbury Park.”

And the more I thought about the matter the more painfully certain it seemed that the most important and typical modern things could not be done with a chorus. One could not, for instance, be a great financier and sing ; because the essence of being a great financier is that you keep quiet. You could not even in many modern circles be a public man and sing ; because in those circles the essence of being a public man is that you do nearly everything in private. Nobody would imagine a chorus of money-lenders. Every one knows the story of the solicitors’ corps of volunteers who, when the Colonel on the battlefield cried “ Charge ! ” all said simultaneously, “ Six-and-eightpence.” Men can sing while charging in a military, but hardly in a legal sense. And at the end of my reflections I had really got no further than the sub-conscious feeling of my friend the bank-clerk—that there is something spiritually suffocating about our life ; not about our laws merely, but about our life. Bank-clerks are without songs not because they are poor, but because they are sad. Sailors are much poorer.

As I passed homewards I passed a little tin building of some religious sort, which was shaken with shouting as a trumpet is torn with its own tongue. *They* were singing anyhow ; and I had for an instant a fancy I had often had before ; that with us the super-human is the only place where you can find the human. Human nature is hunted, and has fled into sanctuary.

IN DEFENCE OF SILLY PEOPLE.

ROBERT LYND.

Mr. H. G. Wells, in the course of a recent exposition of his creed, reiterates his faith in 'the master being, Man,' and in the necessity of devoting whatever gifts we possess to his good. He makes it clear, however, that by Man he does not mean men, or, at least, the men of our own time—the Toms, Dicks, and Harrys who at present populate the earth from China to Peru. 'I do not believe,' he declares, 'in the surrender of one jot or tittle of one's intelligence and will to the greatest happiness of the greatest number, or to the will of the majority, or any such nonsense; I am not that sort of democrat. The world and its future is not for feeble folk any more than it is for selfish folk. It is not for the multitude, but for the best. The best of to-day will be the commonplace of to-morrow! And he goes on to say: 'If I am something of a social leveller, it is not because I want to give silly people a good time, but because I want to make opportunity universal and not leave out one single being who is worth while.'

There is much in this that is reasonable enough. Every one who has given five minutes' thought to the subject, will agree, for example, that the will of the majority has in itself no more claim on our respect than the will of the minority. That 'the

will of the majority must prevail' is a useful working formula in politics, and it is a formula which enables sharply-divided societies to live in a state of civil peace instead of wasting their energies in civil war. Hence the formula is a good one, even if the will of the majority is sometimes bad. At the same time, the will of the majority, if it became a will to tyrannize over the minority, would produce as odious a tyranny as any other dictatorship. If the majority in a Protestant country decided to suppress the Catholic religion, no democrat would regard such a decision as really democratic; and, if a working-class majority resolved that the professional classes must live on inferior food and send their children to inferior schools, it would win little respect from subsequent ages. One has merely to consider a few hypothetical cases of this kind in order to realize that the will of the majority is tolerable only so long as the majority remembers that it has duties and that the minority has rights. The voice of the people is so far from being the voice of God that at a crisis in history it could think of nothing better to call for than the release of Barabbas. Yet, somehow, the formula that commends it works—in the countries that are fit to work it.

When, however, Mr. Wells comes to the happiness of the majority, and its importance, he is on more disputable ground. If one had supreme power, it is difficult to think of anything better at which one could aim than the greatest happiness of the greatest number. Some of the Golden Ages of the past are ages which abounded in great poets, painters, sculptors, and orators, but others are ages in which human beings as a

whole seem to have been happier, or at least less miserable, than in common times. The medievalist idealizes a Merrie England in which, rightly or wrongly, he believes cheerfulness was more universal than it is in our industrial towns to-day. Wordsworth hailed the French Revolution with rapture because he believed that it was a prelude to 'joy in widest commonalty spread'. Those who praise Free Trade praise it not least 'because by its coming thousands of 'feeble folk' and 'silly people' were made more comfortable and were spared the miseries of semi-starvation. A statesman who, during a food shortage, told his fellow-countrymen that he had no time to attend to the wants of silly people because he was devoting all his talents to the good of the master being, Man, would go down to history as a monster.

To compare Mr. Wells's position with that of such a statesman would clearly be a travesty. But I am not sure that Mr. Wells's position can be defended with much better reasons. There is nothing more dangerous in politics than to pay too much attention to an imaginary master being, Man, at the expense of silly people who are actually alive. It is possible to look after the interests of the silly people and at the same time to work for the good of a wiser posterity, and obviously all wise statesmanship must do both. But the ordinary statesman would work for the good of posterity even if he thought that it would consist of men and women no better than ourselves. Where Mr. Wells differs from most statesmen is that he appears to be more enthusiastic about posterity than about his contemporaries, because he believes that posterity will be a greater and nobler race

of men and women. Everybody hopes that it will be, but it is a thing that we cannot take for granted. The world has made progress in many respects since the Flood, and even since the days of the Greeks ; but we cannot say for certain that the proportion of silly people has become noticeably smaller. I have seen it stated that the human brain to-day is not demonstrably superior to the brain of men whom we look back on as savages. I cannot help believing, in spite of evidence to the contrary, that the collective intelligence of the human race has improved, but I am also prepared to believe that the ordinary brain in the Athens of Pericles was at least equal to the ordinary brain in London in the twentieth century. If this is so, it seems possible that the master being, Man, may be a mere figure of speech to which it would be ridiculous to sacrifice ordinary men and women with their comparatively moderate desires.

Mr. Wells, of course, makes a distinction between giving silly people a good time and giving everybody an* 'opportunity'. But what does giving everybody an opportunity mean except giving the majority an opportunity to have a good time? Some will take advantage of the opportunity to become learned in the arts and sciences, but even most of these will devote a great part of their energies to having a good time or to giving their families a good time—to living in more comfortable houses, eating better food, wearing better clothes, and all kinds of material comforts and pleasures. Silliness is as prevalent in the world of art and science as anywhere else. It is not cured by the reading of poetry. It does not vanish

when one is an expert in higher mathematics. Mr. Wells would probably agree that many philosophers and statesmen are silly. If this is so, how can we demand miraculous intelligence in ordinary human beings—even in the human beings of to-morrow? Education has done much for men and women, but how far can it be said to have eradicated what Mr. Wells would regard as silliness? Some of the most highly educated men and women in the world talk and behave as sillily as agricultural labourers.

For this reason I hold that the social reformer and idealist will have to come to terms with the silly people, and that he ought to make it one of his chief objects to see that they have a reasonably good time. He cannot be equally sure of benefiting them in any other way. It is better that a poor man should be a philosopher than that he should have a chicken in his pot, but one can be more certain of doing him good by giving him a chicken in his pot than by punishing him for his indifference to philosophy. A good time, no doubt, is something more than a sufficiency of food, clothes and shelter; but there is much to be said even for a good time that implies a little luxury. Naturally, one would not like to see everybody, whether silly or wise, having too much of a good time. But that is only because too much of a good time ceases to be a good time. And, apart from this, one likes to see other people living intelligently and with something more serious to think about than eating and drinking and gala nights in the Riviera hotels. The State can do much towards giving men and women an opportunity to enjoy wider interests than these; but,

before everything else, it seems to me, it must put good food, clothes, and shelter—in other words, the first ingredients of a good time.

The truth is, if a social levelling resulted only in everybody's having a good time, that alone would be an abundant justification for it. The religious teachers and philosophers would come afterwards and point out that in order to go on having a good time it was necessary to think about other things than having a good time. But the statesman would have done good work, as the doctor has done good work when he has cured a disease, or the lifeboatman when he has rescued a shipwrecked crew. The doctor does not hesitate to save the life of a patient till he has been assured that his patient is a being who is 'worth while' and not a silly person. The lifeboatmen do not abandon a sinking passenger-ship on the ground that the passengers are mainly silly people who would merely go and have a good time if they were rescued. It does not matter twopence whether people are silly or not. We are all silly by some standard, but, whether we are silly or wise, we prefer being alive to being dead; we prefer being well-fed to starving; we hate being cold or wet or unable to afford a holiday, and we hate these things for our families as well as for ourselves. Even if we are saints or philosophers, these are still among our profoundest miseries; and we prefer a civilization that would release us from them even to a civilization that would concentrate on producing 'the best' men and women. Besides, who knows who are 'the best'? Is it certain that the matter will have been decided even after another million years? My own

impression is that, unless a miracle happens, the world will, for as long as we can foresee, be populated by a multitude largely consisting of silly people. I confess I prefer these silly people to the master being, Man, whom I have never met. I hope that they will have a better and better time as time goes on, and, if the master being, Man, ever appears among them, I am sure that he will see to it that they have.

ON RAILWAYS AND THINGS.

H. BELLOC.

Railways have changed the arrangement and distribution of crowds and solitude, but have done nothing to disturb the essential contrast between them.

The more behindhand of my friends, among whom I count the weary men of the towns, are ceaselessly bewailing the effect of railways and the spoiling of the country; nor do I fail, when I hear such complaints, to point out their error, courteously to hint at their sheep-like qualities, and with all the delicacy imaginable to let them understand they are no better than machines repeating worn-out formulæ through the nose. The railways and those slow lumbering things the steamboats have not spoilt our solitudes, on the contrary they have intensified the quiet of the older haunts, they have created new sanctuaries, and (crowning blessing) they make it easy for us to reach our refuges.

For in the first place you will notice that new lines of travel are like canals cut through the stagnant marsh of an old civilization, draining it of populace and worry, and concentrating upon themselves the odious pressure of humanity.

You know (to adopt the easy or conversational style) that you and I belong to a happy minority. We are the sons of the hunters and the wandering singers, and from our boyhood nothing ever gave

us greater pleasure than to stand under lonely skies in forest clearings, or to find a beach looking westward at evening over unfrequented seas. But the great mass of men love companionship so much that nothing seems of any worth compared with it. Human communion is their meat and drink, and so they use the railways to make bigger and bigger hives for themselves.

Now take the true modern citizen, the usurer. How does the usurer suck the extremest pleasure out of his holiday ? He takes the train preferably at a very central station near the Strand, and (if he can choose his time) on a foggy and dirty day ; he picks out an express that will take him with the greatest speed through the Garden of Eden, nor does he begin to feel the full savour of relaxation till a row of abominable villas appears on the southern slope of what were once the downs ; these villas stand like the skirmishers of a foul army deployed : he is immediately whirled into Brighton and is at peace. There he has his wish for three days ; there he can never see anything but houses, or, if he has to walk along the sea, he can rest his eye on herds of unhappy people and huge advertisements, and he can hear the newspaper boys telling lies (perhaps special lies he has been paid for) at the top of their voices ; he can note as evening draws on the pleasant glare of gas upon the street mud and there pass him the familiar surroundings of servility, abject poverty, drunkenness, misery, and vice. He has his music-hall on the Saturday evening with the sharp, peculiar finish of the London accent in the patriotic song, he has the London paper on Sunday to tell him that his nastiest little Colonial war was a

crusade, and on Monday morning he has the familiar feeling that follows his excesses of the previous day. . . . Are you not glad that such men and their lower fellows swarm by hundreds of thousands into the "resorts"? Do you not bless the railways that take them so quickly from one Hell to another.

Never let me hear you say that the railways spoil a countryside; they do, it is true, spoil this or that particular place—as, for example, Crewe, Brighton, Stratford-on-Avon—but for this disadvantage they give us I know not how many delights. What is more English than the country railway station? I defy the eighteenth century to produce anything more English, more full of home and rest and the nature of the country than my junction. Twenty-seven trains a day stop at it or start from it; it serves even the expresses. Smith's monopoly has a bookstall there; you can get cheap Kipling and Harmsworth to any extent, and yet it is a theme for English idylls. The one-eyed porter whom I have known from childhood; the station-master who ranges us all in ranks, beginning with the Duke and ending with a sad, frayed and literary man; the little chaise in which the two old ladies from Barlton drive up to get their paper of an evening, the servant from the inn, the newsboy whose mother keeps a sweetshop—they are all my village friends. The glorious Sussex accent, whose only vowel is the broad "a", grows but more rich and emphatic from the necessity of impressing itself upon foreign intruders. The smoke also of the train as it skirts the Downs is part and parcel of what has become (thanks to the trains) our encloistered

country life ; the smoke of the trains is a little smudge of human activity which permits us to match our incomparable seclusion with the hurly-burly from which we have fled. Upon my soul, when I climb up the Beacon to read my book on the warm turf, the sight of an engine coming through the cutting is an emphasis of my selfish enjoyment. I say "There goes the Brighton train," but the image of Brighton, with its Anglo-Saxons and its Vision of Empire, does not oppress me ; it is a far-off thing ; its life ebbs and flows along that belt of iron to distances that do not regard me.

Consider this also with regard to my railway : it brings me what I want in order to be perfect in my isolation. Those books discussing Problems : whether or not there is such an idea as right ; the inconvenience of being married ; the worry of being Atheist and yet living upon a clerical endowment, —these fine discussions come from a library in a box by train and I can torture myself for a shilling, whereas, before the railways, I should have had to fall back on the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the County History. In the way of newspapers it provides me with just the companionship necessary to a hermitage. Often and often, after getting through one paper, I stroll down to the junction and buy fifteen others, and so enjoy the fruits of many minds.

Thanks to my railway I can sit in the garden of an evening and read my paper as I smoke my pipe, and say, "Ah ! That's Buggin's work. I remember 'him well ; he worked for Rhodes.... Hullo ! Here's Simpson at it again ; since when

did they buy *him*?..." And so forth. I lead my pastoral life, happy in the general world about me, and I serve, as sauce to such healthy meat, the piquant wickedness of the town; nor do I ever note a cowardice, a lie, a bribery, or a breach of trust, a surrender in the field, or a new Peerage, but I remember that my newspaper could not add these refining influences to my life but for the *railway* which I set out to praise at the beginning of this and intend to praise manfully to the end.

Yet another good we owe to railways occurs to me. They keep the small towns going.

Don't pester me with "economics" on that point; I know more economics than you, and I say that but for the railways the small towns would have gone to pieces. There never yet was a civilization growing richer and improving its high roads in which the small towns did not dwindle. The village supplied the local market with bodily necessities; the intellectual life, the civic necessities had to go into the large towns. It happened in the second and third centuries in Italy; it happened in France between Henri IV and the Revolution; it was happening here before 1830.

Take those little paradises Ludlow and Leominster; consider Arundel, and please your memory with the admirable slopes of Whitchurch; grow contented in a vision of Ledbury, of Rye, or of Abingdon, or of Beccles with its big church over the river, or of Newport in the Isle of Wight, or of King's Lynn, or of Lymington—you would not have any of these but for the railway, and there are 1800 such in England—one for every tolerable man.

Valognes in the Cotentin, Bourg-d'Oysan down in the Dauphiné in its vast theatre of upright hills, St. Julien in the Limousin, Aubusson-in-the-hole, Puy (who does not connect beauty with the word?), Mansle in the Charente country—they had all been half dead for over a century when the railway came to them and made them jolly, little, trim, decent, self-contained, worthy, satisfactory, genial, comforting and human *πολιτειαε*, with clergy, upper class, middle class, poor, soldiers, yesterday's news, a college, anti-Congo men, fools, strong riders, old maids, and all that makes a state. In England the railway brought in that beneficent class, the gentlemen; in France, that still more beneficent class, the Haute Bourgeoisie.

I know what you are going to say; you are going to say that there were squires before the railways in England. Pray have you considered how many squires there were to go round? About half a dozen squires to every town, that is (say) four gentlemen, and of those four gentlemen let us say two took some interest in the place. It wasn't good enough . . . and heaven help the country towns now if they had to depend on the great houses! There would be a smart dog-cart once a day with a small (vicious and servile) groom in it, an actor, a foreign money-lender, a popular novelist, or a newspaper owner jumping out to make his purchases and driving back again to his host's within the hour. No, no; what makes the country town is the Army, the Navy, the Church, and the Law—especially the retired ones.

Then think of the way in which the railways keep a good man's influence in a place and a bad

man's out of it. Your good man loves a country town, but he must think, and read, and meet people, so in the last century he regretfully took a town house and had his little house in the country as well. Now he lives in the country and runs up to town when he likes.

He is always a permanent influence in the little city—especially if he has but £400 a year, which is the normal income of a retired gentleman (yes, it is so, and if you think it is too small an estimate, come with me some day and make an inquisitorial tour of my town). As for the vulgar and cowardly man, he hates small towns (fancy a South-African financier in a small town!), well, the railway takes him away. Of old he might have had to stay there or starve, now he goes to London and runs a rag, or goes into Parliament, or goes to dances dressed up in imitation of a soldier; or he goes to Texas and gets hanged—it's all one to me. He's out of my town.

And as the railways have increased the local refinement and virtue, so they have ennobled and given body to the local dignitary. What would the Bishop of Caen (he calls himself Bishop of Lisieux and Bayeux, but that is archaeological pedantry); what, I say, would the Bishop of Caen be without his railway? A Phantom or a Paris magnate. What the Mayor of High Wycombe? Ah! what indeed! But I cannot waste any more of this time of mine in discussing one aspect of the railway; what further I have to say on the subject shall be presented in due course in my book on *The Small Town of Christendom*.* I will close

* *The Small Town of Christendom: An Analytical Study.* With an Introduction by Joseph Reinach. Ulmo et Cie £ 25 net.

this series of observations with a little list of benefits the railway gives you, many of which would not have occurred to you but for my ingenuity, some of which you may have thought of at some moment or other, and yet would never have retained but for my patient labour in this.

The railway gives you seclusion. If you are in an express alone you are in the only spot in Western Europe where you can be certain of two or three hours to yourself. At home in the dead of night you may be wakened by a policeman or a sleep walker or a dog. The heaths are populous. You cannot climb to the very top of Helvellyn to read your own poetry to yourself without the fear of a tourist. But in the corner of a third-class going north or west you can be sure of your own company; the best, the most sympathetic, the most brilliant in the world.

The railway gives you sharp change. And what we need in change is surely keenness. For instance, if one wanted to go sailing in the old days, one left London, had a bleak drive in the country, got nearer and nearer the sea, felt the cold and wet and discomfort growing on one, and after half a day or a day's gradual introduction to the thing, one would at last have got on deck, wet and wretched, and half the fun over. Nowadays what happens? Why, the other day, a rich man was sitting in London with a poor friend; they were discussing what to do in three spare days they had. They said "let us sail." They left London in a nice, warm, comfortable, rich-padded, swelly carriage at four, and before dark they were letting everything go, putting on the oilies, driving through

the open in front of it under a treble-reefed storm jib, praying hard for their lives in last Monday's gale, and wishing to God they had stayed at home—all in the four hours. That is what you may call piquant, it braces and refreshes a man.

For the rest I cannot detail the innumerable minor advantages of railways; the mild excitement which is an antidote to gambling; the shaking which (in moderation) is good for livers; the meeting familiarly with every kind of man and talking politics to him; the delight in rapid motion; the luncheon-baskets; the porters; the solid guard; the strenuous engine-driver (note this next time you travel—it is an accurate observation). And of what other kind of modern thing can it be said that more than half-pay dividends? Thinking of these things, what sane and humorous man would ever suggest that a part of life, so fertile in manifold and human pleasure, should ever be bought by the dull clique who call themselves “the State,” and should yield under such a scheme yet *more*, yet *larger*, yet *securer* salaries to the younger sons.

DREAMTHORP.

ALEXANDER SMITH.

It matters not to relate how or when I became a denizen of Dreamthorp ; it will be sufficient to say that I am not a born native, but that I came to reside in it a good while ago now. The several towns and villages in which, in my time, I have pitched a tent did not please, for one obscure reason or another ; this one was too large, t'other too small ; but when, on a summer evening about the hour of eight, I first beheld Dreamthorp, with its westward-looking windows painted by sunset, its children playing in the single straggling street, the mothers knitting at the open doors, the fathers standing about in long white houses, chatting or smoking ; the great tower of the ruined castle rising high into the rosy air, with a whole troop of swallows—by distance made as small as gnats—skimming about its rents and fissures ;—when I first beheld all this, I felt instinctively that my knapsack might be taken off my shoulders, that my tired feet might wander no more, that at last, on the planet, I had found a home. From that evening I have dwelt here, and the only journey I am like now to make, is the very inconsiderable one, so far at least as distance is concerned, from the house in which I live to the graveyard beside the ruined castle. There, with the former inhabitants of the place, I trust

to sleep quietly enough, and nature will draw over our heads her coverlet of green sod, and tenderly tuck us in, as a mother her sleeping ones, so that no sound from the world shall ever reach us, and no sorrow trouble us any more.

The village stands far inland ; and the streams that trot through the soft green valleys all about have as little knowledge of the sea, as the three-years' child of the storms and passions of manhood. The surrounding country is smooth and green, full of undulations ; and pleasant country roads strike through it in every direction, bound for distant towns and villages, yet in no hurry to reach them. On these roads the lark in summer is continually heard ; nests are plentiful in the hedges and dry ditches ; and on the grassy banks, and at the feet of the bowed dikes, the blue-eyed speedwell smiles its benison on the passing wayfarer. On these roads you may walk for a year and encounter nothing more remarkable than the country cart, troops of tawny children from the woods, laden with primroses, and at long intervals—for people in this district live to a ripe age—a black funeral creeping in from some remote hamlet ; and to this last the people reverently doff their hats and stand aside. Death does not walk about here often, but when he does, he receives as much respect as the squire himself. Everything round one is unhurried, quiet, moss-grown, and orderly. Season follows in the track of season, and one year can hardly be distinguished from another. Time should be measured here by the silent dial, rather than by the ticking clock, or by the chimes of the church. Dreamthorp can boast of a respectable antiquity, and in it the trade of the builder is

unknown. Ever since I remember, not a single stone has been laid on the top of another. The castle, inhabited now by jackdaws and starlings, is old ; the chapel which adjoins it is older still ; and the lake behind both, and in which their shadows sleep, is, I suppose, as old as Adam. A fountain in the market-place, all mouths and faces and curious arabesques—as dry, however, as the castle moat—has a tradition connected with it ; and a great noble riding through the street one day several hundred years ago, was shot from a window by a man whom he had injured. The death of this noble is the chief link which connects the place with authentic history. The houses are old, and remote dates may yet be deciphered on the stones above the doors ; the apple-trees are mossed and ancient ; countless generations of sparrows have bred in the thatched roofs, and thereon have chirped out their lives. In every room of the place men have been born, men have died. On Dreamthorp centuries have fallen, and have left no more trace than have last winter's snowflakes. This commonplace sequence and flowing on of life is immeasurably affecting. That winter morning, when Charles lost his head in front of the banqueting-hall of his own palace, the icicles hung from the eaves of the houses here, and the clown kicked the snowballs from his clouted shoon, and thought but of his supper when, at three o'clock, the red sun set in the purple mist. On that Sunday in June while Waterloo was going on, the gossips, after morning service, stood on the country roads discussing agricultural prospects, without the slightest suspicion that the day passing over their heads would beat

famous one in the calendar. Battles have been fought, kings have died, history has transacted itself; but all unheeding and untouched, Dreamthorp has watched apple-trees redden, and wheat ripen, and smoked its pipe, and quaffed its mug of beer, and rejoiced over its new-born children, and with proper solemnity carried its dead to the churchyard. As I gaze on the village of my adoption, I think of many things very far removed, and seem to get closer to them. The last setting sun that Shakespeare saw reddened the windows, here, and struck warmly on the faces of the hinds coming home from the fields. The mighty storm that raged while Cromwell lay a-dying made all the oakwoods groan round about here, and tore the thatch from the very roofs I gaze upon. When I think of this, I can almost, so to speak, lay my hand on Shakespeare and on Cromwell. These poor walls were contemporaries of both, and I find something affecting in the thought. The mere soil is, of course, far older than either, but *it* does not touch one in the same way. A wall is the creation of a human hand, soil is not.

This place suits my whim, and I like it better year after year. As with everything else, since I began to love it I find it gradually growing beautiful. Dreamthorp—a castle, a chapel, a lake, a straggling strip of grey houses, with a blue film of smoke over all lies embosomed in emerald. Summer, with its daisies, runs up to every cottage door. From the little height where I am now sitting, I see it beneath me. Nothing could be more peaceful. The wind and the birds fly over it. A passing sunbeam makes brilliant a

white gable-end, and brings out the colours of the blossomed apple-tree beyond, and disappears. I see figures in the street, but hear them not. The hands on the church clock seem always pointing to one hour. Time has fallen asleep in the afternoon sunshine. I make a frame of my fingers, and look at my picture. On the walls of the next Academy's Exhibition will hang nothing half so beautiful !

My village is, I think, a special favourite of summer's. Every window-sill in it she touches with colour and fragrance ; everywhere she wakens the drowsy murmurs of the hives ; every place she scents with apple-blossom. Traces of her hand are to be seen on the weir beside the ruined mill ; and even the canal, along which the barges come and go, has a great white water-lily asleep on its olive-coloured face. Never was velvet on a monarch's robe so gorgeous as the green mosses that be-ruff the roofs of farm and cottage, when the sunbeam slants on them and goes. The old road out towards the common, and the hoary dikes that might have been built in the reign of Alfred, have not been forgotten by the generous adorning season ; for every fissure has its mossy cushion, and the old blocks themselves are washed by the loveliest grey-green lichens in the world, and the large loose stones lying on the ground have gathered to themselves the peace fullest mossy coverings. Some of these have not been disturbed for a century. Summer has adorned my village as gaily, and taken as much pleasure in the task, as the people of old, when Elizabeth was queen, took in the adornment of the May-pole against a summer festival. And, just think, not

only Dreamthorp, but every English village she has made beautiful after one fashion or another—making vivid green the hill slope on which straggling white Welsh hamlets hang right opposite the sea ; drowning in apple-blossom the red Sussex ones in the fat valley. And think, once more, every spear of grass in England she has touched with a livelier green ; the crest of every bird she has burnished ; every old wall between the four seas has received her mossy and licheny attentions ; every nook in every forest she has sown with pale flowers, every marsh she has dashed with the fires of the marigold. And in the wonderful night the moon knows, she hangs—the planet on which so many millions of us fight, and sin, and agonize, and die—a sphere of glow-worm light.

Having discoursed so long about Dreamthorp, it is but fair that I should now introduce you to her lions. These are, for the most part, of a commonplace kind ; and I am afraid that, if you wish to find romance in them, you must bring it with you. I might speak of the old church-tower, or of the churchyard beneath it, in which the village holds its dead, each resting place marked by a simple stone, on which is inscribed the name and age of the sleeper, and a Scripture text beneath, in which live our hopes of immortality. But, on the whole, perhaps it will be better to begin with the canal, which wears on its olive-coloured face the big white water-lily already chronicled. Such a secluded place is Dreamthorp that the railway does not come near, and the canal is the only thing that connects it with the world. It stands high, and from it the undulating country may be seen stretching away into the

grey of distance, with hills and woods, and stains of smoke which mark the sites of villages. Every now and then a horse comes staggering along the towing-path, trailing a sleepy barge filled with merchandise. A quiet, indolent life these bargemen lead in the summer days. One lies stretched at his length on the sun-heated plank; his comrade sits smoking in the little dog-hutch, which I suppose he calls a cabin. Silently they come and go; silently the wooden bridge lifts to let them through. The horse stops at the bridge-house for a drink, and there I like to talk a little with the men. They serve instead of a newspaper, and retail with great willingness the news they have picked up in their progress from town to town. I am told they sometimes marvel who the old gentleman is who accosts them from beneath a huge umbrella in the sun, and that they think him either very wise or very foolish. Not in the least unnatural! We are great friends, I believe—evidence of which they occasionally exhibit by requesting me to disburse a trifle for drink-money. This canal is a great haunt of mine of an evening. The water hardly invites one to bathe in it, and a delicate stomach might suspect the flavour of the eels caught therein; yet, to my thinking, it is not in the least destitute of beauty. A barge trailing up through it in the sunset is a pretty sight; and the heavenly crimsons and purples sleep quite lovingly upon its glossy ripples. Nor does the evening star disdain it, for as I walk along I see it mirrored therein as clearly as in the waters of the Mediterranean itself.

The old castle and chapel already alluded to are, perhaps, to a stranger, the points to attract

him in Dreamthorp. Back from the houses is the lake, on the green sloping banks of which, with broken windows and tombs, the ruins stand. As it is noon, and the weather is warm, let us go and sit on a turret. Here, on these very steps, as old ballads tell, a queen sat once, day after day, looking southward for the light of returning spears. I bethink me that yesterday, no further gone, I went to visit a consumptive shoemaker ; seated here I can single out his very house, nay, the very window of the room in which he is lying. On that straw roof might the raven alight, and flap his sable wings. There, at this moment, is the supreme tragedy being enacted. A woman is weeping there, and little children are looking on with a sore bewilderment. Before nightfall the poor peaked face of the bowed artisan will have gathered its ineffable peace, and the widow will be led away from the bedside by the tenderness of neighbours, and the cries of the orphan brood will be stilled. And yet this present indubitable suffering and loss does not touch me like the sorrow of the woman of the ballad, the phantom probably of a minstrel's brain. The shoemaker will be forgotten—I shall be forgotten ; and long after visitors will sit here and look out on the landscape and murmur the simple lines. But why do death and dying obtrude themselves at the present moment ? On the turret opposite, about the distance of a gunshot, is as pretty a sight as eye could wish to see. Two young people, strangers apparently, have come to visit the ruin. Neither the ballad queen, nor the shoemaker down yonder, whose respirations are getting shorter and shorter, touches them in the

least. They are merry and happy, and the grey-beard turret has not the heart to thrust a foolish moral upon them. They would not thank him if he did, I daresay. Perhaps they could not understand him. Time enough! Twenty years hence they will be able to sit down at his feet, and count griefs with him, and tell him tale for tale. Human hearts get ruinous in so much less time than stone walls and towers. See, the young man has thrown himself down at the girl's feet on a little space of grass. In her scarlet cloak she looks like a blossom springing out of a crevice on the ruined steps. He gives her a flower, and she bows her face down over it almost to her knees. What did the flower say? Is it to hide a blush? He looks delighted; and I almost fancy I see a proud colour on his brow. As I gaze, these young people make for me a perfect idyll. The generous, ungrudging sun, the melancholy ruin, decked, like mad Lear, with the flowers and ivies of forgetfulness and grief, and between them, sweet and evanescent, human truth and love?

Love!—does it yet walk the world, or is it imprisoned in poems and romances? Has not the circulating library become the sole home of the passion? Is love not become the exclusive property of novelists and play-wrights, to be used by them only for professional purposes? Surely, if the men I see are lovers, or ever have been lovers, they would be nobler than they are. The knowledge that he is beloved should—*must* make a man tender, gentle, upright, pure. While yet a youngster in a jacket, I can remember falling desperately in love with a young lady several

years my senior—after the fashion of youngsters in jackets. Could I have fibbed in these days? Could I have betrayed a comrade? Could I have stolen eggs or callow young from the nest? Could I have stood quietly by and seen the weak or the maimed bullied? Nay, verily! In these absurd days she lighted up the whole world for me. To sit in the same room with her was like the happiness of perpetual holiday; when she asked me to run a message for her, or to do any, the slightest, service for her, I felt as if a patent of nobility were conferred on me. I kept my passion to myself, like a cake, and nibbled it in private. Juliet was several years my senior, and had a lover—was, in point of fact, actually engaged; and, in looking back, I can remember I was too much in love to feel the slightest twinge of jealousy. I remember also seeing Romeo for the first time, and thinking him a greater man than Caesar or Napoleon. The worth I credited him with, the cleverness, the goodness, the everything! He awed me by his manner and bearing. He accepted that girl's love coolly and as a matter of course: it put him no more about than a crown and sceptre puts about a king. What I would have given my life to possess—being only fourteen, it was not much to part with after all—he wore lightly, as he wore his gloves or his cane. It did not seem a bit too good for him. His self-possession appalled me. If I had seen him take the sun out of the sky, and put it into his breeches' pocket, I don't think I should have been in the least degree surprised. Well, years after, when I had discarded my passion with my jacket, I have assisted this middle-aged Romeo home from a

roystering wine-party, and heard him hiccup out his marital annoyances, with the strangest remembrances of old times, and the strangest deductions therefrom. Did that man with the idiotic laugh and the blurred utterance ever love? Was he ever capable of loving? I protest I have my doubts. But where are my young people? Gone! So it is always. We begin to moralize and look wise, and Beauty, who is something of a coquette, and of an exacting turn of mind, and likes attentions, gets disgusted with our wisdom or our stupidity, and goes off in a huff. Let the baggage go!

The ruined chapel adjoins the ruined castle on which I am now sitting, and is evidently a building of much older date. It is a mere shell now. It is quite roofless, ivy covers it in part; the stone tracery of the great western window is yet intact, but the coloured glass is gone with the splendid vestments of the abbot, the fuming incense, the chanting choirs, and the patient, sad-eyed monks, who muttered *Aves*, shrived guilt, and illuminated missals. Time was when this place breathed actual benedictions, and was a home of active peace. At present it is visited only by the stranger, and delights but the antiquary. The village people have so little respect for it, that they do not even consider it haunted. There are several tombs in the interior bearing knights' escutcheons, which time has sadly defaced. The dust you stand upon is noble. Earls have been brought here in dinted mail from 'battle,' and earls' wives from the pangs of child-bearing. The last trumpet will break the slumber of a right honourable company. One of the tombs—the

most perfect of all in point of preservation—I look at often, and try to conjecture what it commemorates. With all my fancies, I can get no further than the old story of love and death. There, on the slab, the white figures sleep ; marble hands, folded in prayer, on marble breasts. And I like to think that he was brave, she beautiful ; that, although the monument is worn by time, and sullied by the stains of the weather, the qualities which it commemorates—husbandly and wifely affection, courtesy, courage, knightly scorn of wrong and falsehood, meekness, penitence, charity—are existing yet somewhere, recognizable by each other. The man who in this world can keep the whiteness of his soul, is not likely to lose it in any other.

In summer I spent a good deal of time floating about the lake. The landing-place to which my boat is tethered is ruinous, like the chapel and palace, and my embarkation causes quite a stir in the sleepy little village. Small boys leave their games and mud-pies, and gather round in silence : they have seen me get off a hundred times, but their interest in the matter seems always new. Not unfrequently an idle cobbler in red nightcap and leathern apron, leans on a broken stile, and honours my proceedings with his attention. I shoot off, and the human knot dissolves. The lake contains three islands, each with a solitary tree, and on these islands the swans breed. I feed the birds daily with bits of bread. See, one comes gliding towards me, with superbly arched neck, to receive its customary alms ! How wildly beautiful its motions ! How haughtily it begs ! The green pasture lands run down to

the edge of the water, and into it in the afternoons the red kine wade and stand knee-deep in their shadows, surrounded by troops of flies. Patiently the honest creatures abide the attacks of their tormentors. Now one swishes itself with its tail—now its neighbour flaps a huge ear. I draw my oars alongside, and let my boat float at its own will. The soft blue heavenly abysses, the wandering streams of vapour, the long beaches of, rippled cloud, are glassed and repeated in the lake. Dreamthorp is silent as a picture, the voices of the children are mute; and the smoke from the houses, the blue pillars all sloping in one angle, float upward as if in sleep. Grave and stern the old castle rises from its emerald banks, which long ago came down to the lake in terrace on terrace, gay with fruits and flowers, and with stone nymph and satyrs hid in every nook. Silent and empty enough to-day! A flock of daws suddenly bursts out from a turret, and round and round they wheel, as if in panic. Has some great scandal exploded? Has a conspiracy been discovered? Has a revolution broken out? The excitement has subsided, and one of them, perched on the old banner-staff, chatters confidentially to himself as he, sideways, eyes the world beneath him. Floating about thus, time passes swiftly, for, before I know where I am, the kine have withdrawn from the lake to couch on the herbage, while one on a little height is lowing for the milkmaid and her pails. Along the road I see the labourers coming home for supper, while the sun setting behind me makes the village windows blaze; and so I take out my oars, and pull leisurely through waters faintly flushed with evening colours.

I do not think that Mr. Buckle could have written his *History of Civilization* in Dreamthorp, because in it books, conversation, and the other appurtenances of intellectual life, are not to be procured. I am acquainted with birds, and the building of nests—with wild-flowers and the seasons in which they blow—but with the big world far away, with what men and women are thinking, and doing, and saying, I am acquainted only through the *Times*, and the occasional magazine or review, sent by friends whom I have not looked upon for years, but by whom, it seems, I am not yet forgotten. The village has but few intellectual wants, and the intellectual supply is strictly measured by the demand. Still there is something. Down in the village, and opposite the curiously-carved fountain, is a schoolroom which can accommodate a couple of hundred people on a pinch. There are our public meetings held. Musical entertainments have been given there by a single performer. In that schoolroom last winter an American biologist terrified the villagers, and, to their simple understandings, mingled up the next world with this. Now and again some rare bird of an itinerant lecturer covers dead walls with posters, yellow and blue, and to that schoolroom we flock to hear him. His rounded periods the eloquent gentleman devolves amidst a respectful silence. His audience do not understand him, but they see that the clergyman does, and the doctor does ; and so they are content, and look as attentive and wise as possible. Then, in connexion with the schoolroom, there is a public library, where books are exchanged once a month. This library is a kind of Greenwich Hospital for

disabled novels and romances. Each of these books has been in the wars ; some are unquestionable antiques. The tears of three generations have fallen upon their dusky pages. The heroes and the heroines are of another age than ours. Sir Charles Grandison is standing with his hat under his arm. Tom Jones plops from the tree into the water, to the infinite distress of Sophia. Moses comes home from market with his stock of shagreen spectacles. Lovers, warriors, and villains—as dead to the present generation of readers as Cambyases—are weeping, fighting, and intriguing. These books, tattered and torn as they are, are read with delight to-day. The viands are celestial if set forth on a dingy tablecloth. The gaps and chasms which occur in pathetic or perilous chapters are felt to be personal calamities. It is with a certain feeling of tenderness that I look upon these books ; I think of the dead fingers that have turned over the leaves, of the dead eyes that have travelled along the lines. An old novel has a history of its own. When fresh and new, and before it had breathed its secret, it lay on my lady's table. She killed the weary day with it, and when night came it was placed beneath her pillow. At the seaside a couple of foolish heads have bent over it, hands have touched and tingled, and it has heard vows and protestations as passionate as any its pages contained. Coming down in the world, Cinderella in the kitchen has blubbered over it by the light of a surreptitious candle, conceiving herself the while the magnificent Georgiana, and Lord Mordaunt, Georgiana's lover, the pot-boy round the corner. Tied up with many a dingy brother, the auctioneer knocks the

bundle down to the bidder of a few pence, and it finds its way to the quiet cove of some village library, where with some difficulty—as if from want of teeth, and with numerous interruptions—as if from lack of memory, it tells its old stories, and wakes tears, and blushes, and laughter as of yore. Thus it spends its age, and in a few years it will become unintelligible, and then, in the dust-bin, like poor human mortals in the grave, it will rest from all its labours. It is impossible to estimate the benefit which such books have conferred. How often have they loosed the chain of circumstance! What unfamiliar tears—what unfamiliar laughter they have caused! What chivalry and tenderness they have infused into rustic loves! Of what weary hours they have cheated and beguiled their readers! The big, solemn history books are in excellent preservation; the story books are defaced and frayed, and their out-of-elbows condition is their pride, and the best justification of their existence. They are tashed, as roses are, by being eagerly handled and smelt. I observe, too, that the most ancient romances are not in every case the most severely worn. It is the pace that tells in horses, men, and books. There are Nestors wonderfully hale; there are juveniles in a state of dilapidation. One of the youngest books, *The Old Curiosity Shop*, is absolutely falling to pieces. That book, like Italy, is, possessor of the fatal gift; but happily, in its case, everything can be rectified by a new edition. We have buried warriors and poets, princes and queens, but no one of these was followed to the grave by sincerer mourners than was little Nell.

Besides the itinerant lecturer, and the permanent library, we have the Sunday sermon. These sum up the intellectual aids and furtherances of the whole place. We have a church and a chapel, and I attend both. The Dreamthorp people are Dissenters, for the most part ; why, I never could understand ; because dissent implies a certain intellectual effort. But Dissenters they are, and Dissenters they are likely to remain. In an ungainly building, filled with hard gaunt pews, without an organ, without a touch of colour in the windows, with nothing to stir the imagination of the devotional sense, the simple people worship. On Sunday, they are put upon a diet of spiritual bread-and-water. Personally, I should desire more generous food. But the labouring people listen attentively, till once they fall asleep, and they wake up to receive the benediction with a feeling of having done their duty. They know they ought to go to chapel, and they go. I go likewise, from habit, although I have long ago lost the power of following a discourse. In my pew, and whilst the clergyman is going on, I think of the strangest things—of the tree at the window, of the congregation of the dead outside, of the wheatfields and the cornfields beyond and all around. And the odd thing is, that it is during sermon only that my mind flies off at a tangent and busies itself with things removed from the place and the circumstances. Whenever it is finished, fancy returns from her wanderings, and I am alive to the objects around me. The clergyman knows my humour, and, is good Christian enough to forgive me ; and he smiles good-humouredly when I ask him to let me have

the chapel keys, that I may enter, when in the mood, and preach a sermon to myself. To my mind an empty chapel is impressive; a crowded one, comparatively of commonplace affair. Alone, I could choose my own text, and my silent discourse would not be without its practical applications.

An idle life I live in this place, as the world counts it; but then I have the satisfaction of differing from the world as to the meaning of idleness. A windmill twirling its arms all day is admirable only when there is corn to grind. Twirling its arms for the mere barren pleasure of twirling them, or for the sake of looking busy, does not deserve any rapturous pæan of praise. I must be made happy after my own fashion, not after the fashion of other people. Here I can live as I please, here I can throw the reins on the neck of my whim. Here I play with my own thoughts; here I ripen for the grave.

WHAT IS A UNIVERSITY ?

HENRY NEWMAN.

If I were asked to describe as briefly and popularly as I could, what a University was, I should draw my answer from its ancient designation of a *Studium Generale*, or "School of Universal Learning." This description implies the assemblage of strangers from all parts in one spot:—*from all parts*; else, how will you find professors and students for every department of knowledge ? and *in one spot* ; else, how can there be any school at all ? Accordingly, in its simple and rudimental form, it is a school of knowledge of every kind, consisting of teachers and learners from every quarter. Many things are requisite to complete and satisfy the idea embodied in this description ; but such as this a University seems to be in its essence, a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse, through a wide extent of country.

There is nothing far-fetched or unreasonable in the idea thus presented to us ; and if this be a University, then a University does but contemplate a necessity of our nature, and is but one specimen in a particular medium, out of many which might be adduced in others, of a provision for that necessity. Mutual education, in a large sense of the word, is one of the great and incessant occupations of human society, carried on partly with set purpose, and partly not. One generation forms

another ; and the existing generation is ever acting and reacting upon itself in the persons of its individual members. Now, in this process, books I need scarcely say, that is, the *litera scripta*, are one special instrument. It is true ; and emphatically so in this age. Considering the prodigious powers of the press, and how they are developed at this time in the never-intermitting issue of periodicals, tracts, pamphlets, works in serious, and light literature, we must allow there never was a time which promised fairer for dispensing with every other means of information and instruction. What can we want more, you will say, for the intellectual education of the whole man, and for every man, than so exuberant and diversified and persistent a promulgation of all kinds of knowledge ? Why, you will ask, need we go up to knowledge, when knowledge comes down to us ? The Sibyl wrote her prophecies upon the leaves of the forest, and wasted them ; but here such careless profusion might be prudently indulged, for it can be afforded without loss, in consequence of the almost fabulous fecundity of the instrument which these latter ages have invented. We have sermons in stones, and books in the running brooks ; works larger and more comprehensive than those which have gained for ancients an immortality, issue forth every morning, and are projected onwards to the ends of the earth at the rate of hundreds of miles a day. Our seats are strewed, our pavements are powdered, with swarms of little tracts ; and the very bricks of our city walls preach wisdom, by informing us by their placards where we can at once cheaply purchase it.

I allow all this, and much more ; such certainly

is our popular education, and its effects are remarkable. Nevertheless, after all, even in this age, whenever men are really serious about getting what, in the language of trade, is called "a good article," when they aim at something precise, something refined, something really luminous, something really large, something choice, they go to another market ; they avail themselves, in some shape or other, of the rival method, the ancient method, of oral instruction, of present communication between man and man, of teachers instead of learning, of the personal influence of a master, and the humble initiation of a disciple, and, in consequence, of great centres of pilgrimage and throng, which such a method of education necessarily involves. This, I think, will be found to hold good in all those departments or aspects of society, which possess an interest sufficient to bind men together, or to constitute what is called "a world." It holds in the political world, and in the high world, and in the religious world ; and it holds also in the literary and scientific world. —

If the actions of men may be taken as any test of their convictions, then we have reason for saying this, *viz.*, that the province and the inestimable benefit of the *litera scripta* is that of being a record of truth, and an authority of appeal, and an instrument of teaching in the hands of a teacher ; but that, if we wish to become exact and fully furnished in any branch of knowledge which is diversified and complicated, we must consult the living man and listen to his living voice. I am not bound to investigate the cause of this, and anything I may say will, I am conscious, be short of its full analysis ;—perhaps we may suggest, that no books

can get through the number of minute questions which it is possible to ask on any extended subject, or can hit upon the very difficulties which are severally felt by each reader in succession. Or again, that no book can convey the special spirit and delicate peculiarities of its subject with that rapidity and certainty which attend on the sympathy of mind with mind, through the eyes, the look, the accent, and the manner, in casual expressions thrown off at the moment, and the unstudied turns of familiar conversation. But I am already dwelling too long on what is but an incidental portion of my main subject. Whatever be the cause, the fact is undeniable. The general principles of any study you may learn by books at home ; but the detail, the colour, the tone, the air, the life which makes it live in us, you must catch all these from those in whom it lives already. You must imitate the student in French or German, who is not content with his grammar, but goes to Paris or Dresden : you must take example from the young artist, who aspires to visit the great Masters in Florence and in Rome. Till we have discovered some intellectual daguerreotype, which takes off the course of thought, and the form, lineaments, and features of truth, as completely and minutely, as the optical instrument reproduces the sensible object, we must come to the teachers of wisdom to learn wisdom, we must repair to the fountain, and drink there. Portions of it may go from thence to the ends of the earth by means of books ; but the fulness is in one place alone. It is in such assemblages and congregations of intellect that books themselves, the masterpieces of human genius, are written, or at least originated.

The principle on which I have been insisting is so obvious, and instances in point are so ready, that I should think it tiresome to proceed with the subject, except that one or two illustrations may serve to explain my own language about it, which may not have done justice to the doctrine which it has been intended to enforce.

For instance, the polished manners and high-bred bearing which are so difficult of attainment, and so strictly personal when attained,—which are so much admired in society, from society are acquired. All that goes to constitute a gentleman,—the carriage, gait, address, gestures, voice, the ease, the self-possession, the courtesy, the power of conversing, the talent of not offending ; the lofty principle, the delicacy of thought, the happiness of expression, the taste and propriety, the generosity and forbearance, the candour and consideration, the openness of hand ;—these qualities, some of them come by nature, some of them may be found in any rank, some of them are a direct precept of Christianity ; but the full assemblage of them, bound up in the unity of an individual character, do we expect they can be learned from books ?—are they not necessarily acquired, where they are to be found, in high society ? The very nature of the case leads us to say so ; you cannot fence without an antagonist, nor challenge all comers in disputation before you have supported a thesis ; and in like manner, it stands to reason, you cannot learn to converse till you have the world to converse with ; you cannot unlearn your natural bashfulness, or awkwardness, or stiffness, or other besetting deformity, till you serve your time in some school of manners. Well,

and is it not so in matter of fact? The metropolis, the court, the great houses of the land, are the centres to which at stated times the country comes up, as to shrines of refinement and good taste ; and then in due time the country goes back again home, enriched with a portion of the social accomplishments, which those very visits serve to call out and heighten in the gracious dispensers of them. We are unable to conceive how the "gentlemanlike" can otherwise be maintained ; and maintained in this way it is.

And now a second instance : and here too I am going to speak without personal experience of the subject I am introducing. I admit I have not been in Parliament, any more than I have figured in the *beau monde* ; yet I cannot but think that statesmanship, as well as high breeding, is learned, not by books, but in certain centres of education. If it be not presumption to say so, Parliament puts a clever man *au courant* with politics and affairs of state in a way surprising to himself. A member of the Legislature if tolerably observant, begins to see things with new eyes, even though his views undergo no change. Words have a meaning now, and ideas a reality, such as they had not before. He hears a vast deal in public speeches and private conversation, which is never put into print. The bearings of measures and events, the action of parties, and the persons of friends and enemies, are brought out to the man who is in the midst of them with a distinctness, which the most diligent perusal of newspapers will fail to impart to them. It is access to the fountain-heads of political wisdom and experience, it is daily intercourse, of one kind or another, with the

multitude who go up to them, it is familiarity with business, it is access to the contributions of fact and opinion thrown together by many witnesses from many quarters, which does this for him. However, I need not account for a fact, to which it is sufficient to appeal; that the Houses of Parliament and the atmosphere around them are a sort of University of politics.

As regards the world of science, we find a remarkable instance of the principle which I am illustrating, in the periodical meetings for its advance, which have arisen in the course of the last twenty years, such as the British Association. Such gatherings would to many persons appear at first sight simply preposterous. Above all subjects of study, Science is conveyed, is propagated, by books, or by private teaching; experiments and investigations are conducted in silence; discoveries are made in solitude. What have philosophers to do with festive celebrities, and panegyric solemnities with mathematical and physical truth? Yet on a closer attention to the subject, it is found that not even scientific thought can dispense with the suggestions, the instruction, the stimulus, the sympathy, the intercourse with mankind on a large scale, which such meetings secure. A fine time of year is chosen, when days are long, skies are bright, the earth smiles, and all nature rejoices; a city or town is taken by turns, of ancient name or modern opulence, where buildings are spacious and hospitality hearty. The novelty of place and circumstance, the excitement of strange, or the refreshment of well-known faces, the majesty of rank or of genius, the amiable charities of men pleased with both themselves and with each other;

the elevated spirits, the circulation of thought, the curiosity ; the morning sections, the outdoor exercise, the well-furnished, well-earned board, the not ungraceful hilarity, the evening circle ; the brilliant lecture, the discussions or collisions or guesses of great men one with another, the narratives of scientific process, of hopes, disappointments, conflicts, and successes, the splendid eulogistic orations, these and the like constituents of the annual celebration, are considered to do something real and substantial for the advance of knowledge which can be done in no other way. Of course they can but be occasional ; they answer to the annual Act, or Commencement, or Commemoration of a University, not to its ordinary condition ; but they are of a University nature ; and I can well believe in their utility. They issue in the promotion of a certain living and, as it were, bodily communication of knowledge from one to another, of a general interchange of ideas, and a comparison and adjustment of science with science, of an enlargement of mind, intellectual and social, of an ardent love of the particular study, which may be chosen by each individual, and a noble devotion to its interests.

Such meetings, I repeat, are but periodical, and only partially represent the idea of a University. The bustle, and whirl which are their usual concomitants, are in ill keeping with the order and gravity of earnest intellectual education. We desiderate means of instruction which involve no interruption of our ordinary habits ; nor need we seek it long, for the natural course of things brings it about, while we debate over it. In every great country, the metropolis itself becomes a sort of

necessary University, whether we will or no. As the chief city is the seat of the court, of high society, of politics, and of law, so as a matter of course is it the seat of letters also; and at this time, for a long term of years, London and Paris are in fact and in operation Universities, though in Paris its famous University is no more, and in London a University scarcely exists except as a board of administration. The newspapers, magazines, reviews, journals, and periodicals of all kinds, the publishing trade, the libraries, museums, and academies there found, the learned and scientific societies, necessarily invest it with the functions of a University; and that atmosphere of intellect, which in a former age hung over Oxford or Bologna or Salamanca, has, with the change of times, moved away to the centre of civil government. Thither come up youths from all parts of the country, the students of law, medicine, and the fine arts, and the *employés* and *attachés* of literature. There they live, as chance determines; and they are satisfied with their temporary home, for they find in it all that was promised to them there. They have not come in vain, as far as their own object in coming is concerned. They have not learned any particular religion, but they have learned their own particular profession well. They have, moreover, become acquainted with the habits, manners, and opinions of their place of sojourn, and done their part in maintaining the tradition of them. We cannot then be without virtual Universities; a metropolis is such: the simple question is, whether the education sought and given should be based on principle, formed upon rule, directed to the highest ends, or left

to the random succession of masters and schools, one after another, with a melancholy waste of thought and extreme hazard of truth.

Religious teaching itself affords us an illustration of our subject to a certain point. It does not indeed seat itself merely in centres of the world, this is impossible from the nature of the case. It is intended for the many not the few ; its subject matter is truth necessary for us, not truth recondite and rare ; but it concurs in the principle of a University so far as this, that its great instrument, or rather organ, has ever been that which nature prescribes in all education, the personal presence of a teacher, or, in theological language. Oral Tradition. It is the living voice, the breathing form, the expressive countenance, which preaches, which catechizes. Truth, a subtle, invisible, manifold spirit, is poured into the mind of the scholar by his eyes and ears, through his affections, imagination, and reason ; it is poured into his mind and is sealed up there in perpetuity, by propounding and repeating it, by questioning and requestioning, by correcting and explaining, by progressing and then recurring to first principles, by all those ways which are implied in the word "catechizing." In the first ages, it was a work of long time ; months, sometimes years, were devoted to the arduous task of disabusing the mind of the incipient Christian of its pagan errors, and of moulding it upon the Christian faith. The Scriptures indeed were at hand for the study of those who could avail themselves of them ; but St. Irenæus does not hesitate to speak of whole races, who had been converted to Christianity, without being able to read them. To be unable to

read or write was in those times no evidence of want of learning : the hermits of the deserts were, in this sense of the word, illiterate ; yet the great St. Anthony, though he knew not letters, was a match in disputation for the learned philosophers who came to try him. Didymus again, the great Alexandrian theologian, was blind. The ancient discipline, called the *Disciplina Arcani*, involved the same principle. The more sacred doctrines of Revelation were not committed to books but passed on by successive tradition. The teaching on the Blessed Trinity and the Eucharist appears to have been so handed down for some hundred years ; and when at length reduced to writing, it has filled many folios, yet has not been exhausted.

But I have said more than enough in illustration ; I end as I began ;—a University is a place of concourse, whither students come from every quarter for every kind of knowledge. You cannot have the best of every kind everywhere ; you must go to some great city or emporium for it. There you have all the choicest productions of nature and art all together, which you find each in its own separate place elsewhere. All the riches of the land, and of the earth, are carried up thither ; there are the best markets, and there the best workmen. It is the centre of trade, the supreme court of fashion, the umpire of rival talents, and the standard of things rare and precious. It is the place for seeing galleries of first-rate pictures, and for hearing wonderful voices and performers of transcendent skill. It is the place for great preachers, great orators, great nobles, great statesmen. In the nature of things, greatness and unity go together ; excellence implies a centre. And

such, for the third or fourth time, is a University. I hope I do not weary out the reader by repeating it. It is the place to which a thousand schools make contributions; in which the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity, and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward, and discoveries verified and perfected, and rashness rendered innocuous, and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind, and knowledge with knowledge. It is the place where the professor becomes eloquent, and is a missionary and a preacher, displaying his science in its most complete and most winning form, pouring it forth with the zeal of enthusiasm, and lighting up his own love of it in the breasts of his hearers. It is the place where the catechist makes good his ground as he goes, treading in the truth day by day into the ready memory, and wedging and tightening it into the expanding reason. It is a place which wins the admiration of the young by its celebrity, kindles the affections of the middle-aged by its beauty, and rivets the fidelity of the old by its associations. It is a seat of wisdom, a light of the world, a minister of the faith, an Alma Mater of the rising generation. It is this and a great deal more, and demands a somewhat better head and hand than mine to describe it well.

Such is a University in its idea and in its purpose; such in good measure has it before now been in fact. Shall it ever be again? We are going forward in the strength of the Cross, under the patronage of the Blessed Virgin, in the name of St. Patrick, to attempt it.

ENGLAND.

THE RT. HON'BLE STANLEY BALDWIN.

Though I do not think that in the life of a busy man there could be placed into his hands a more difficult toast than this, yet the first thought that comes into my mind as a public man is a feeling of satisfaction and profound thankfulness that I may use the word "England" without some fellow at the back of the room shouting out "Britain." I have often thought how many of the most beautiful passages in the English language would be ruined by that substitution which is so popular to-day. I read in your Dinner-book. "When God wants a hard thing done, He tells it," not to His Britons, but "to His Englishmen." And in the same way to come to a very modern piece of poetry, how different it would be with the altered ending, "For in spite of all temptations to belong to other nations, he remains a Briton."

We have to-night to celebrate our country and our Patron Saint. It always seems to me no mere chance that besides being the Patron Saint of England, St. George was the Patron Saint of those gallant sailors around the shores of the Adriatic, and that in his honour there exists one of the most beautiful chapels in Venice to-day. The Patron Saint of sailors is surely the most suitable Patron Saint for men of the English stock ;

and I think to-night amongst ourselves we might for a minute or two look at those characteristics, contradictory often, peculiar as we believe, in that great stock of which we are all members.

The Englishman is all right as long as he is content to be what God made him, an Englishman, but gets into trouble when he tries to be something else. There are chroniclers, or were chroniclers, who said it was the aping of the French manners by our English ancestors that made us the prey of William the Norman, and led to our defeat at Hastings. Let that be a warning to us not to ape any foreign country. Let us be content to trust ourselves and to be ourselves.

Now, I always think that one of the most curious contradictions about the English stock is this : that while the criticism that is often made of us is not without an element of truth, and that is that as a nation we are less open to the intellectual sense than the Latin races, yet though that may be a fact, there is no nation on earth that had had the same knack of producing geniuses. It is almost a characteristic of the English race ; there is hardly any line in which the nation has not produced geniuses, and in a nation which many people might think restrained, unable to express itself, in this same nation you have a literature second to none that has ever existed in the world, and certainly in poetry supreme.

Then, for a more personal characteristic, we grumble, and we always have grumbled, but we never worry. Now, there is a very great truth in that, because there are foreign nations who worry but do not grumble. Grumbling is more superficial,

leaves less of a mark on the character, and just as the English schoolboy, for his eternal salvation, is impervious to the receipt of learning, and by that means preserves his mental faculties further into middle age and old age than he otherwise would (and I may add that I attribute the possession of such faculties as I have to the fact that I did not overstrain them in youth), just as the Englishman has a mental reserve owing to that gift given him at his birth by St. George, so, by the absence of worry he keeps his nervous system sound and sane, with the result that in times of emergency the nervous system stands when the nervous system of other peoples breaks.

The Englishman is made for a time of crisis, and for a time of emergency. He is serene in difficulties but may seem to be indifferent when times are easy. He may not look ahead, he may not heed warnings, he may not prepare, but when he once starts he is persistent to the death, and he is ruthless in action. It is these gifts that have made the Englishman what he is, and that have enabled the Englishman to make England and the Empire what it is.

It is in staying power that he is supreme, fortunately, being, as I have said, to some extent impervious to intellectual impressions as a nation, he is equally impervious to criticism—a most useful thing for an English statesman. That may be the reason why English statesmen sometimes last longer than those who are not English. I admit that in past generations we carried that virtue to an excess, and by a rebound the sins of the fathers are being visited on the children. For instance,

there was a time when this particular epithet was more in vogue in political society, and the Englishman invariably spoke of the "damned" foreigner. Those days are gone, but the legacy has come to us in this, that by the swing of the pendulum we have in this country what does not exist in any other, a certain section of our people who regard every country as being in the right except their own. It largely arises, I think, among a section of the population who hold beliefs which they cannot persuade their fellow-countrymen to adopt.

There is yet one other point. I think the English people are at heart and in practice the kindest people in the world. With some faults on which I have touched, there is in England a profound sympathy for the under-dog. There is a brotherly and a neighbourly feeling which we see to a remarkable extent through all classes. There is a way of facing misfortunes with a cheerful face. It was shown to a marvellous degree in the war, and in spite of all that he said in criticism of his own people, Ruskin said one of immortal truth. He said : "The English laugh is the purest and truest in the metal that can be minted. And indeed only Heaven can know what the country owes to it." There is a profound truth in that. As long as a people can laugh, they are preserved from the grosser vices of life, they can face all the ills that fortune may bring upon them.

Then, in no nation more than the English is there a diversified individuality. We are a people of individuals, and a people of character. You

may take the writings of one of the greatest and one of the most English of writers, Charles Dickens, and you will find that practically all his characters are English. They are all different, and each of us that has gone through this world with his eyes open and his heart open, has met every one of Dickens's characters in some position or another in life. Let us see to it that we never allow our individuality as Englishmen to be steam-rollered. The preservation of the individuality of the Englishman is essential to the preservation of the type of the race, and if our differences are smoothed out and we lose that great gift, we shall lose at the same time our power. Uniformity of type is a bad thing. I regret very much myself the uniformity of speech. Time was two centuries ago, when you could have told by his speech from what part of England every member of Parliament came. He spoke the speech of his fathers, and I regret that the dialects have gone, and I regret that by a process which for want of a better name we have agreed among ourselves to call education, we are drifting away from the language of the people and losing some of the best English words and phrases which have lasted in the country through centuries to make us all talk one uniform and inexpressive language.

Now, I have very little more that I want to say to you to-night, but on an occasion like this I suppose there is no one who does not ask himself in his heart that is a little shy of expressing it, what it is that England stands for to him, and to her. And there comes into my mind a wonder as to what England may stand for in the minds

of generations to come if our country goes on during the next generation as she has done in the last two, in seeing her fields converted into towns.

To me, England is the country, and the country is England. And when I ask myself what I mean by England, when I think of England when I am abroad, England comes to me through my various senses—through the ear, through the eye and through certain imperishable scents. I will tell you what they are, and there may be those among you who feel as I do.

The sounds of England, the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy, the corn-cake on a dewy morning, the sound of the scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill, the sight that has been in England since England was a land, and may be seen in England long after the Empire has perished and every works in England has ceased to function, for centuries the one eternal sight of England. The wild anemones in the woods in April, the last load at night of hay being drawn down a lane as the twilight comes on, when you can scarcely distinguish the figures of the horses as they take it home to the farm, and above all, most subtle, most penetrating and most moving, the smell of wood smoke coming up in an autumn evening, or the smell of the scutch fires; that wood smoke that our ancestors, tens of thousands of years ago, must have caught on the air when they were coming home with the result of the day's forage, when they were still nomads, and when they were still roaming in the forests and the plains of the continent of Europe. These

things strike down into the very depths of our nature, and touch chords that go back to the beginning of time and the human race, but they are chords that with every year of our life sound a deeper note in our innermost being.

These are the things that make England, and I grieve for it that they are not the childish inheritance of the majority of the people to-day in our country. They ought to be the inheritance of every child born into this country, but nothing can be more touching than to see how the working man and woman after generations in the towns will have their tiny bit of garden if they can, will go to gardens if they can, to look at something they have never seen as children, but which their ancestors knew and loved. The love of these things is innate and inherent in our people. It makes for that love of home, one of the strongest features of our race, and it is that that makes our race seek its new home in the Dominions overseas, where they have room to see things like this that they can no more see at home. It is that power of making homes, almost peculiar to our people, it is one of the sources of their greatness. They go overseas, and they take with them what they learned at home: love of justice, love of truth, and the broad humanity that are so characteristic of English people. It may well be that these traits on which we pride ourselves, which we hope to show and try to show in our own lives, may survive—survive among our people so long as they are people—and I hope and believe this, that just as to-day, more than fifteen centuries since the last of those great Roman legionaries left England, we still speak of

the Roman strength, and the Roman work and the Roman character, so perhaps in the ten thousandth century, long after the Empires of this world as we know them have fallen and others have risen and fallen, and risen and fallen again, the men who are then on this earth may yet speak of those characteristics which we prize as the characteristics of the English, and that long after, maybe, the name of the country has passed away, wherever men are honourable and upright and persevering, lovers of home, of their brethren, of justice and of humanity, the men in the world of that day may say, "We still have among us the gifts of that great English race."

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ENGLISH MIND.

MATHEW ARNOLD.

What are the essential characteristics of the spirit of our nation ? Not, certainly, an open and clear mind, not a quick and flexible intelligence. Our greatest admirers would not claim for us that we have these in a pre-eminent degree ; they might say that we had more of them than our detractors gave us credit for ; but they would not assert them to be our essential characteristics. They would rather allege, as our chief spiritual characteristics, energy and honesty ; and, if we are judged favourably and positively, not invidiously and negatively, our chief characteristics are, no doubt, these ;—energy and honesty, not an open and clear mind, not a quick and flexible intelligence. Openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence were very signal characteristics of the Athenian people in ancient times ; everybody will feel that. Openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence are remarkable characteristics of the French people in modern times ; at any rate, they strikingly characterize them as compared with us ; I think everybody, or almost everybody, will feel that. I will not now ask what more the Athenian or the French spirit has than this, nor what shortcomings either of them may have as a set-off against this ; all I want now to point out is that they have this, and that we have it in a much lesser degree.

Let me remark, however, that not only in the moral sphere, but also in the intellectual and spiritual sphere, energy and honesty are most important and fruitful qualities ; that, for instance, of what we call genius, energy is the most essential part. So, by assigning to a nation energy and honesty as its chief spiritual characteristics,—by refusing to it, as at all eminent characteristics, openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence,—we do not by any means, as some people might at first suppose, relegate its importance and its power of manifesting itself with effect from the intellectual to the moral sphere. We only indicate its probable special line of successful activity in the intellectual sphere, and, it is true, certain imperfections and failings to which, in this sphere, it will always be subject. Genius is mainly an affair of energy ; and poetry is mainly an affair of genius ; therefore, a nation whose spirit is characterized by energy may well be eminent in poetry ;—and we have Shakespeare. Again, the highest reach of science is, one may say, an inventive power, a faculty of divination, akin to the highest power exercised in poetry ; therefore, a nation whose spirit is characterized by energy may well be eminent in science ;—and we have Newton. Shakespeare and Newton : in the intellectual sphere there can be no higher names. And what that energy, which is the life of genius, above everything demands and insists upon, is freedom ; entire independence of all authority, prescription, and routine,—the fullest room to expand as it will. Therefore, a nation whose chief spiritual characteristic is energy, will not be very apt to set up, in intellectual matters, a fixed standard, an authority, like an academy. By this

it certainly escapes certain real inconveniences and dangers, and it can, at the same time, as we have seen, reach undeniably splendid heights in poetry and science. On the other hand, some of the requisites of intellectual work are specially the affair of quickness of mind and flexibility of intelligence. The form, the method of evolution, the precision, the proportions, the relations of the parts to the whole, in an intellectual work, depend mainly upon them. And these are the elements of an intellectual work which are really most communicable from it, which can most be learned and adopted from it, which have, therefore, the greatest effect upon the intellectual performance of others. Even in poetry, these requisites are very important ; and the poetry of a nation, not eminent for the gifts on which they depend, will, more or less, suffer by this shortcoming. In poetry, however, they are, after all, secondary, and energy is the first thing ; but in prose they are of first-rate importance. In its prose literature, therefore, and in the routine of intellectual work generally, a nation with no particular gifts for these will not be so successful. These are what, as I have said, can to a certain degree be learned and appropriated, while the free activity of genius cannot. Academies consecrate and maintain them, and, therefore, a nation with an eminent turn for them naturally establishes academies. So far as routine and authority tend to embarrass energy and inventive genius, academies may be said to be obstructive to energy and inventive genius, and, to this extent, to the human spirit's general advance. But then this evil is so much compensated by the propagation, on a large scale, of the mental aptitudes and demands

which an open mind and a flexible intelligence naturally engender, genius itself, in the long run, so greatly finds its account in this propagation, and bodies like the French Academy have such power for promoting it, that the general advance of the human spirit is perhaps, on the whole, rather furthered than impeded by their existence.

How much greater is our nation in poetry than prose ! How much better, in general, do the productions of its spirit show in the qualities of genius than in the qualities of intelligence ! One may constantly remark this in the work of individuals ; how much more striking, in general, does any Englishman,— of some vigour of mind, but by no means a poet,—seem in his verse than in his prose ! No doubt his verse suffers from the same defects which impair his prose, and he cannot express himself with real success in it ; but how much more powerful a personage does he appear in it, by dint of feeling, and of originality and movement of ideas, than when he is writing prose ! With a Frenchman of like stamp, it is just the reverse : set him to write poetry, he is limited, artificial, and impotent ; set him to write prose, he is free, natural, and effective. The power of French literature is in its prose-writers, the power of English literature is in its poets. Nay, many of the celebrated French poets depend wholly for their fame upon the qualities of intelligence which they exhibit,— qualities which are the distinctive support of prose ; many of the celebrated English prose-writers depend wholly for their fame upon the qualities of genius and imagination which they exhibit,— qualities which are the distinctive support of poetry. But, as I have said, the qualities of genius are less

transferable than the qualities of intelligence ; less can be immediately learned and appropriated from their product ; they are less direct and stringent intellectual agencies, though they may be more beautiful and divine.

MIDDLE-CLASS.

ARNOLD BENNETT.

As a novelist, a creative artist working in the only literary "form" which widely appeals to the public, I sometimes wonder curiously what the public is. Not often, because it is bad for the artist to think often about the public. I have never, by inquiry from those experts, my publishers, learnt anything useful or precise about the public. I hear the words "the public," "the public," uttered in awe or in disdain, and this is all. The only conclusion which can be drawn from what I am told is that the public is the public. Still, it appears that my chief purchasers are the circulating libraries. It appears that without the patronage of the circulating libraries I should either have to live on sixpence a day or starve. Hence, when my morbid curiosity is upon me, I stroll into Mudie's or the *Times'* Book Club, or I hover round Smith's bookstall at Charing Cross.

The crowd at these places is the prosperous crowd, the crowd which grumbles at income-tax and pays it. Three hundred and seventy-five thousand persons paid income-tax last year, under protest: they stand for the existence of perhaps a million souls, and this million is a handful floating more or less easily on the surface of the forty millions of the population. The great majority of my readers must be somewhere in this million. There can be few hirers of books who neither pay income-tax nor

live on terms of dependent equality with those who pay it. I see at the counters people on whose foreheads it is written that they know themselves to be the salt of the earth. Their assured, curt voices, their proud carriage, their clothes, the similarity of their manners, all show that they belong to a caste and that the caste has been successful in the struggle for life. It is called the middle-class, but it ought to be called the upper-class, for nearly everything is below it. I go to the Stores, to Harrod's Stores, to Barker's, to Rumpelmeyer's to the Royal Academy, and to a dozen clubs in Albemarle Street and Dover Street, and I see again just the same crowd, well fed, well dressed, completely free from the cares which beset at least five-sixths of the English race. They have worries; they take taxis because they must not indulge in motor-cars, hansom's because taxis are an extravagance, and omnibuses because they really must economize. But they never look twice at two-pence. They curse the injustice of fate, but secretly they are aware of their luck. When they have nothing to do, they say, in effect : " Let's go out and spend something." And they go out. They spend their lives in spending. They deliberately gaze into shop windows in order to discover an outlet for their money. You can catch them at it any day.

I do not belong to this class by birth. Artists very seldom do. I was born slightly beneath it. But by the help of God and strict attention to business I have gained the right of entrance into it. I admit that I have imitated its deportment, with certain modifications of my own; I think its deportment is in many respects worthy of imitation. I am acquainted with members of it; some are

artists like myself ; a few others win my sympathy, by honestly admiring my work ; and the rest I like because I like them. But the philosopher in me cannot, though he has tried, melt away by profound and instinctive hostility to this class. Instead of decreasing, my hostility grows. I say to myself ; " I can never be content until this class walks along the street in a different manner, until that now absurd legend has been worn clean off its forehead." Henry Harland was not a great writer. but he said : *Il faut souffrir pour être sel.* I ask myself impatiently : " When is this salt going to begin to suffer ? " That is my attitude towards the class. I frequent it but little. Nevertheless I know it intimately, nearly all the intimacy being on my side. For I have watched it during long, agreeable, sardonic months and years in foreign hotels. In foreign hotels you get the essence of it, if not the cream.

Chief among its characteristics—after its sincere religious worship of money and financial success—I should put its intense self-consciousness as a class. The world is a steamer in which it is a travelling saloon. Occasionally it goes to look over from the promenade deck at the steerage. Its feelings towards the steerage are kindly. But the tone in which it says, " the steerage " cuts the steerage off from it more effectually than many bulkheads. You perceive also from that tone that it could never be surprised by anything that the steerage might do. Curious social phenomenon, the steerage ! In the saloon there runs a code, the only possible code, the final code ; and it is observed. If it is not observed, the infraction causes pain, distress. Another marked characteristic is its gigantic temperamental

dullness, unresponsiveness to external suggestion, a lack of humour—in short, a heavy and half-honest stupidity ; ultimate product of gross prosperity, too much exercise, too much sleep. Then I notice a grim passion for the *status quo*. This is natural. Let these people exclaim as they will against the structure of society, the last thing they desire is to alter it. This passion shows itself in a naive admiration for everything that has survived its original usefulness, such as sail-drill and uniforms. Its mirror of true manhood remains that excellent and appalling figure, the Brushwood Boy. The passion for the *status quo* also show itself in a general defensive, sullen hatred of all ideas whatever. You cannot argue with these people. “Do you really think so ?” they will politely murmur, when you have asserted your belief that the earth is round, or something like that. And their tone says “Would you mind very much if we leave this painful subject ? My feelings on it are too deep for utterance.” Lastly, I am impressed by their attitude towards the artist, which is medieval, or perhaps Roman. Blind to nearly every form of beauty, they scorn art, and scorning art they scorn artists. It was this class which, at inaugurations of public edifices, invented the terrible toast-formula, “*The architect and contractor.*” And if epics were inaugurated by banquet, this class would certainly propose the health of the poet and printer, after the King and the publishers. Only sheer ennui sometimes drives it to seek distraction in the artist’s work. It prefers the novelist among artists because the novel gives the longest surcease from ennui at the least expenditure of money and effort.

It is inevitable that I shall be accused of exaggeration, cynicism, or prejudice : probably all three. Whenever one tells the truth in this island of compromise, one is sure to be charged on these counts, and to be found guilty. But I too am of the sporting race, and forty years have taught me that telling the truth is most dangerous and most glorious of all forms of sport. Alpine climbing in winter is nothing to it. I like it. I will only add that I have been speaking of the solid *bloc* of the caste ; I admit the existence of a broad fringe of exceptions. And I truly sympathize with the *bloc*. I do not blame the *bloc*. I know that the members of the *bloc* are, like me, the result of evolutionary forces now spent. My hostility to the *bloc* is beyond my control, an evolutionary force gathering way. Upon my soul, I love the *bloc*. But when I sit among it, clothed in correctness, and reflect that the *bloc* maintains me and mine in a sort of comfort, because I divert its leisure, the humour of the situation seems to me enormous.

I continue my notes on the great, stolid, comfortable class which forms the backbone of the novel-reading public. The best novelists do not find their material in this class. Thomas Hardy, never. H. G. Wells, almost never ; now and then he glances at it ironically, in an episodic manner. Hale White (Mark Rutherford), never. Rudyard Kipling, rarely ; when he touches it, the reason is usually because it happens to embrace the military caste, and the result is usually such mawkish stories as *William the Conqueror* and *The Brushwood Boy*. J. M. Barrie, never. W. W. Jacobs, never. Murray Gilchrist, never. Joseph Conrad, never. Leonard Merrick, very slightly. George

Moore, in a *Drama in Muslin*, wrote a masterpiece about it twenty years ago ; *Vain Fortune* is also good ; but for a long time it had ceased to interest the artist in him, and his very finest work ignores it. George Meredith was writing greatly about it thirty years ago. Henry James, with the chill detachment of an outlander, fingers the artistic and cosmopolitan fringe of it. In a rank lower than these we have William de Morgan and John Galsworthy. The former does not seem to be inspired by it. As for John Galsworthy, the quality in him which may possibly vitiate his right to be considered a major artist is precisely his fierce animosity to this class. Major artists are seldom so cruelly hostile to anything whatever as John Galsworthy is to this class. He does in fiction what John Sargeant does in paint ; and their inimical observation of their subjects will gravely prejudice both of them in the eyes of posterity. I think I have mentioned all the novelists who have impressed themselves at once on the public and genuinely on the handful of persons whose taste is severe and sure. There may be, there are, other novelists alive whose work will end by satisfying the tests of the handful. Whether any of these others deal mainly with the superior stolid comfortable, I cannot certainly say ; but I think not. I am ready to assert that in quite modern English fiction there exists no large and impartial picture of the superior stolid comfortable which could give pleasure to a reader of taste. Rather hard on the class that alone has made novel-writing a profession in which a man can earn a reasonable livelihood !

The explanation of this state of affairs is obscure. True, that distinguished artists are very seldom

born into the class. But such an explanation would be extremely inadequate. Artists often move creatively with ease far beyond the boundaries of their native class. Thomas Hardy is not a peasant, nor was Stendhal a marquis. I could not, with any sort of confidence, offer an explanation. I am, however, convinced that only a supreme artist could now handle successfully the material presented by the class in question. The material itself lacks interest, lacks essential vitality, lacks both moral and spectacular beauty. It powerfully repels the searcher after beauty and energy. It may be in a decay. One cannot easily recall a great work of art of which the subject is decadence.

The backbone of the novel-reading public is excessively difficult to please, and rarely capable of enthusiasm. Listen to Mudie subscribers on the topic of fiction, and you will scarcely ever hear the accent of unmixed pleasure. It is surprising how even favourites are maltreated in conversation. Some of the most successful favourites seem to be hated, and to be read under protest. The general form of approval is a doubtful "Yee-s!" with a whole tail of unspoken "buts" lying behind it. Occasionally you catch the ecstatic note, "Oh! Yes; a *sweet* book!" Or, with masculine curtness; "Fine book, that!" (For example, *The Hill*, by Horace Annesley Vachell!). It is in the light of such infrequent exclamations that you may judge the torpid reluctance of other praise. The reason of all this is twofold: partly in the book, and partly in the reader. The backbone dislikes the raising of any question which it deems to have been decided: a peculiarity which at once puts it in opposition to all fine work, and to nearly all passable second-rate

work. It also dislikes being confronted with anything that it considers "unpleasant," that is to say interesting. It has a genuine horror of the truth neat. It quite honestly asks "to be taken out of itself," unaware that to be taken out of itself is the very last thing it really desires. What it wants is to be confirmed in itself. Its religion is the *status quo*. The difficulties of the enterprise of not offending it either in subject or treatment are, perhaps, already sufficiently apparent. But incomparably the greatest obstacle to pleasing it lies in the positive fact that it prefers not to be pleased. It undoubtedly objects to the very sensations which an artist aims to give. If I have heard once, I have heard fifty times, resentful remarks similar to : "I'm not going to read any more bosh by *him* ! Why, I simply couldn't put the thing down !" It is profoundly hostile to art, and the empire of art. It will not willingly yield. Its attitude to the magic spell is its attitude to the dentist's gas-bag. This is the most singular trait that I have discovered in the backbone.

Why, then, does the backbone put itself to the trouble of reading current fiction ? The answer is that it does so, not with any artistic, spiritual, moral, or informative purpose, but simply in order to pass time. Lately, one hears, it has been, neglecting fiction in favour of books of memoirs, often scandalous, and historical compilations, for the most part scandalous sexually. That it should tire of the fiction offered to it is not surprising, seeing that it so seldom gets the fiction of its dreams. The supply of good, workmanlike fiction is much larger to-day than ever it was in the past. The same is to be said of the supply of genuinely

distinguished fiction. But the supply of fiction which really appeals to the backbone of the fiction-reading public is far below the demand. The backbone grumbles, but it continues to hire the offensive stuff, because it cannot obtain sufficient of the inoffensive—and time hangs so heavy! The caprice for grape-nut history and memoirs cannot endure, for it is partially a pose. Besides, the material will run short. After all, Napoleon only had a hundred and three mistresses, and we are already at Mademoiselle Georges. The backbone, always loyal to its old beliefs, will return to fiction with a new gusto, and the cycle of events will recommence.

But it is well for novelists to remember that, in the present phase of society and mechanical conditions of the literary market, their professional existence depends on the fact that the dullest class in England takes to novels merely as a refuge from its own dullness. And while it is certain that no novelist of real value really pleases that class, it is equally certain that without its support (willing or unwilling—usually the latter) no novelist could live by his pen. Remove the superior stolid comfortable, and the circulating libraries would expire. And exactly when the circulating libraries breathed their last sigh the publishers of fiction would sympathetically give up the ghost. If you happen to be a literary artist, it makes you think—the reflection that when you dine you eat the bread unwillingly furnished by the enemies of art and of progress!

OF THE UNION AND INTERNAL PROSPERITY OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE, IN
"THE AGE OF THE ANTONINES.

EDWARD GIBBON.

It is not alone by the rapidity or extent of conquest that we should estimate the greatness of Rome. The sovereign of the Russian deserts commands a larger portion of the globe. In the seventh summer after his passage of the Hellespont, Alexander erected the Macedonian trophies on the banks of the Hyphasis. Within less than a century, the irresistible Zingis, and the Mogul princes of his race, spread their cruel devastations and transient empire from the sea of China to the confines of Egypt and Germany. But the firm edifice of Roman power was raised and preserved by the wisdom of ages. The obedient provinces of Trajan and the Antonines were united by laws and adorned by arts. They might occasionally suffer from the partial abuse of delegated authority; but the general principle of government was wise, simple, and beneficent. They enjoyed the religion of their ancestors, whilst in civil honours and advantages they were exalted, by just degrees, to an equality with their conquerors.

I. The policy of the emperors and the senate, as far as it concerned religion, was happily seconded by the reflections of the enlightened, and by the habits of the superstitious, part of their subjects. The various modes of worship which prevailed in the Roman world were all considered by the

people as equally true; by the philosopher as equally false; and by the magistrate as equally useful. And thus toleration produced not only mutual indulgence, but even religious concord.

The superstition of the people was not embittered by any mixture of theological rancour; nor was it confined by the chains of any speculative system. The devout polytheist, though fondly attached to his national rites, admitted with implicit faith the different religions of the earth. Fear, gratitude, and curiosity, a dream or an omen, a singular disorder, or a distant journey, perpetually disposed him to multiply the articles of his belief, and to enlarge the list of his protectors. The thin texture of the pagan mythology was interwoven with various but not discordant materials. As soon as it was allowed that sages and heroes, who had lived or who had died for the benefit of their country, were exalted to a state of power and immortality, it was universally confessed that they deserved, if not the adoration, at least the reverence of all mankind. The deities of a thousand groves and a thousand streams possessed in peace their local and respective influence; nor could the Roman who deprecated the wrath of the Tiber deride the Egyptian who presented his offering to the beneficent genius of the Nile. The visible powers of Nature, the planets, and the elements, were the same throughout the universe. The invisible governors of the moral world were inevitably cast in a similar mould of fiction and allegory. Every virtue, and even vice, acquired its divine representative; every art and profession its patron, whose attributes in the most distant ages and countries were uniformly

derived from the character of their peculiar votaries. A republic of gods of such opposite tempers and interests required, in every system, the moderating hand of a supreme magistrate, who, by the progress of knowledge and of flattery, was gradually invested with the sublime perfections of an Eternal Parent and an Omnipotent Monarch. Such was the mild spirit of antiquity, that the nations were less attentive to the difference than to the resemblance of their religious worship. The Greek, the Roman, and the Barbarian, as they met before their respective altars, easily persuaded themselves that, under various names and with various ceremonies, they adored the same deities. The elegant mythology of Homer gave a beautiful and almost a regular form to the polytheism of the ancient world.

The philosophers of Greece deduced their morals from the nature of man rather than from that of God. They meditated, however, on the Divine Nature as a very curious and important speculation, and in the profound inquiry they displayed the strength and weakness of the human understanding. Of the four most celebrated schools, the Stoics and the Platonists endeavoured to reconcile the jarring interests of reason and piety. They have left us the most sublime proofs of the existence and perfections of the first cause ; but, as it was impossible for them to conceive the creation of matter, the workman in the Stoic philosophy was not sufficiently distinguished from the work ; whilst, on the contrary, the spiritual God of Plato and his disciples resembled an idea rather than a substance. The opinions of the Academics and Epicureans were of a less

religious cast ; but, whilst the modest science of the former induced them to doubt, the positive ignorance of the latter urged them to deny, the providence of a Supreme Ruler. The spirit of inquiry, prompted by emulation and supported by freedom, had divided the public teachers of philosophy into a variety of contending sects ; but the ingenious youth, who from every part resorted to Athens and the other seats of learning in the Roman empire, were alike instructed in every school to reject and to despise the religion of the multitude. How, indeed, was it possible that a philosopher should accept as divine truths the idle tales of the poets, and the incoherent traditions of antiquity ; or that he should adore, as gods, those imperfect beings whom he must have despised, as men ? Against such unworthy adversaries, Cicero condescended to employ the arms of reason and eloquence ; but the satire of Lucian was a much more adequate as well as more efficacious weapon. We may be well assured that a writer conversant with the world would never have ventured to expose the gods of his country to public ridicule, had they not already been the objects of secret contempt among the polished and enlightened orders of society.

Notwithstanding the fashionable irreligion which prevailed in the age of the Antonines, both the interests of the priests and the credulity of the people were sufficiently respected. In their writings and conversation the philosophers of antiquity asserted the independent dignity of reason ; but they resigned their actions to the commands of law and of custom. Viewing with a smile of pity and indulgence the various errors of

the vulgar, they diligently practised the ceremonies of their fathers, devoutly frequented the temples of the gods ; and, sometimes condescending to act a part on the theatre of superstition, they concealed the sentiments of an Atheist under the sacerdotal robes. Reasoners of such a temper were scarcely inclined to wrangle about their respective modes of faith or of worship. It was indifferent to them what shape the folly of the multitude might choose to assume ; and they approached, with the same inward contempt and the same external reverence, the altars of the Libyan, the Olympian, or the Capitoline Jupiter.

It is not easy to conceive from what motives a spirit of persecution could introduce itself into the Roman councils. The magistrates could not be actuated by a blind though honest bigotry, since the magistrates were themselves philosophers ; and the schools of Athens had given laws to the senate. They could not be impelled by ambition or avarice, as the temporal and ecclesiastical powers were united in the same hands. The pontiffs were chosen among the most illustrious of the senators ; and the office of Supreme Pontiff was constantly exercised by the emperors themselves. They knew and valued the advantages of religion, as it is connected with civil government. They encouraged the public festivals which humanize the manners of the people. They managed the arts of divination as a convenient instrument of policy ; and they respected, as the firmest bond of society, the useful persuasion that, either in this or in a future life, the crime, of perjury is most assuredly punished by the avenging gods. But, whilst they acknowledged the general

advantages of religion, they were convinced that the various modes of worship contributed alike to the same salutary purposes; and that, in every country, the form of superstition which had received the sanction of time and experience was the best adapted to the climate and to its inhabitants. Avarice and taste very frequently despoiled the vanquished nations of the elegant statues of their gods and the rich ornaments of their temples; but, in the exercise of the religion which they derived from their ancestors, they uniformly experienced the indulgence, and even protection, of the Roman conquerors. The province of Gaul seems, and indeed only seems, an exception to this universal toleration. Under the specious pretext of abolishing human sacrifices, the emperors Tiberius and Claudius suppressed the dangerous, power of the Druids; but the priests themselves, their gods, and their altars, subsisted in peaceful obscurity till the final destruction of Paganism.

Rome, the capital of a great monarchy, was incessantly filled with subjects and strangers from every part of the world, who all introduced and enjoyed the favourite superstitions of their native country. Every city in the empire was justified in maintaining the purity of its ancient ceremonies; and the Roman senate, using the common privilege, sometimes interposed to check this inundation of foreign rites. The Egyptian superstition, of all the most contemptible and abject, was frequently prohibited; the temples of Serapis and Isis demolished, and their worshippers banished from Rome and Italy. But the zeal of fanaticism prevailed over the cold and feeble efforts of policy. The exiles returned,

the proselytes multiplied, the temples were restored with increasing splendour, and Isis and Serapis at length assumed their place among the Roman deities. Nor was this indulgence a departure from the old maxims of government. In the purest ages of the commonwealth, Cybele and Æsculapius had been invited by solemn embassies; and it was customary to tempt the protectors of besieged cities by the promise of more distinguished honours than they possessed in their native country. Rome gradually became the common temple of her subjects; and the freedom of the city was bestowed on all the gods of mankind.

II. The narrow policy of preserving without any foreign mixture the pure blood of the ancient citizens, had checked the fortune, and hastened the ruin, of Athens and Sparta. The aspiring genius of Rome sacrificed vanity to ambition, and deemed it more prudent, as well as honourable, to adopt virtue and merit for her own wheresoever they were found, among slaves or strangers, enemies or barbarians. During the most flourishing æra of the Athenian commonwealth the number of citizens gradually decreased from about thirty to twenty-one thousand. If, on the contrary, we study the growth of the Roman republic, we may discover that, notwithstanding the incessant demands of wars and colonies, the citizens who, in the first census of Servius Tullius, amounted to no more than eighty-three thousand, were multiplied, before the commencement of the social war, to the number of four hundred and sixty-three thousand men able to bear arms in the service of their country. When the allies of Rome claimed an equal share of honours and privileges, the senate indeed preferred

performed their appointed task of fashioning to the yoke the vanquished nations. The free states and cities which had embraced the cause of Rome were rewarded with a nominal alliance, and insensibly sunk into real servitude. The public authority was everywhere exercised by the ministers of the senate and of the emperors, and that authority was absolute and without control. But the same salutary maxims of government, which had secured the peace and obedience of Italy, were extended to the most distant conquests. A nation of Romans was gradually formed in the provinces, by the double expedient of introducing colonies, and of admitting the most faithful and deserving of the provincials to the freedom of Rome.

“Wheresoever the Roman conquers, he inhabits,” is a very just observation of Seneca, confirmed by history and experience. The natives of Italy, allured by pleasure or by interest, hastened to enjoy the advantages of victory ; and we may remark that, about forty years after the reduction of Asia, eighty thousand Romans were massacred in one day by the cruel orders of Mithridates. These voluntary exiles were engaged for the most part in the occupations of commerce, agriculture, and the farm of the revenue. But after the legions were rendered permanent by the emperors, the provinces were peopled by a race of soldiers ; and the veterans, whether they received the reward of their service in land or in money, usually settled with their families in the country where they had honourably spent their youth. Throughout the empire, but more particularly in the western parts, the most fertile districts and the most convenient situations were reserved for the

establishment of colonies ; some of which were of a civil and others of a military nature. In their manners and internal policy, the colonies formed a perfect representation of their great parent ; and [as] they were soon endeared to the natives by the ties of friendship and alliance, they effectually diffused a reverence for the Roman name, and a desire which was seldom disappointed of sharing, in due time, its honours and advantages. The municipal cities insensibly equalled the rank and splendour of the colonies ; and in the reign of Hadrian it was disputed which was the preferable condition, of those societies which had issued from, or those which had been received into, the bosom of Rome. The right of *Latium*, as it was called, conferred on the cities to which it had been granted a more partial favour. The magistrates only, at the expiration of their office, assumed the quality of Roman citizens ; but as those offices were annual, in a few years they circulated round the principal families. Those of the provincials who were permitted to bear arms in the legions ; those who exercised any civil employment ; all, in a word, who performed any public service, or displayed any personal talents, were rewarded with a present, whose value was continually diminished by the increasing liberality of the emperors. Yet even in the age of the Antonines, when the freedom of the city had been bestowed on the greater number of their subjects, it was still accompanied with very solid advantages. The bulk of the people acquired, with that title, the benefit of the Roman laws, particularly in the interesting articles of marriage, testaments, and inheritances ; and the road of fortune was open to those whose

pretensions were seconded by favour or merit. The grandsons of the Gauls who had besieged Julius Caesar in Alesia commanded legions, governed provinces, and were admitted into the senate of Rome. Their ambition, instead of disturbing the tranquillity of the state, was intimately connected with its safety and greatness.

So sensible were the Romans of the influence of language over national manners, that it was their most serious care to extend, with the progress of their arms, the use of the Latin tongue. The ancient dialects of Italy, the Sabine, the Etruscan, and the Venetian, sunk into oblivion ; but in the provinces, the east was less docile than the west to the voice of its victorious preceptors. This obvious difference marked the two portions of the empire with a distinction of colours, which, though it was in some degree concealed during the meridian splendour of prosperity, became gradually more visible as the shades of night descended upon the Roman world. The western countries were civilized by the same hands which subdued them. As soon as the barbarians were reconciled to obedience, their minds were opened to any new impressions of knowledge and politeness. The language of Virgil and Cicero, though with some inevitable mixture of corruption, was so universally adopted in Africa, Spain, Gaul, Britain, and Pannohia, that the faint traces of the Punic or Celtic idioms were preserved only in the mountains, or among the peasants. Education and study insensibly inspired the natives of those countries with the sentiments of Romans ; and Italy gave fashions, as well as laws, to her Latin provincials. They solicited with more ardour, and obtained with

more facility, the freedom and honours of the state ; supported the national dignity in letters and in arms ; and, at length, in the person of Trajan, produced an emperor whom the Scipios would not have disowned for their countryman. The situation of the Greeks was very different from that of the barbarians. The former had been long since civilized and corrupted. They had too much taste to relinquish their language, and too much vanity to adopt any foreign institutions. Still preserving the prejudices, after they had lost the virtues, of their ancestors, they affected to despise the unpolished manners of the Roman conquerors, whilst they were compelled to respect their superior wisdom and power. Nor was the influence of the Grecian language and sentiments confined to the narrow limits of that once celebrated country. Their empire, by the progress of colonies and conquest, had been diffused from the Hadriatic to the Euphrates and the Nile. Asia was covered with Greek cities, and the long reign of the Macedonian kings had introduced a silent revolution into Syria and Egypt. In their pompous courts those princes united the elegance of Athens with the luxury of the East, and the example of the court was imitated, at an humble distance, by the higher ranks of their subjects. Such was the general division of the Roman empire into the Latin and Greek languages. To these we may add a third distinction for the body of the natives in Syria, and especially in Egypt. The use of their ancient dialects, by secluding them from the commerce of mankind, checked the improvements of those barbarians. The slothful effeminacy of the former exposed them to the

contempt, the sullen ferociousness of the latter excited the aversion, of the conquerors. Those nations had submitted to the Roman power, but they seldom desired or deserved the freedom of the city; and it was remarked that more than two hundred and thirty years elapsed after the ruin of the Ptolemies, before an Egyptian was admitted into the senate of Rome.

It is a just though trite observation, that victorious Rome was herself subdued by the arts of Greece. Those immortal writers who still command the admiration of modern Europe soon became the favourite object of study and imitation in Italy and the western provinces. But the elegant amusements of the Romans were not suffered to interfere with their sound maxims of policy. Whilst they acknowledged the charms of the Greek, they asserted the dignity of the Latin tongue, and the exclusive use of the latter was inflexibly maintained in the administration of civil as well as military government. The two languages exercised at the same time their separate jurisdiction throughout the empire; the former, as the natural idiom of science; the latter, as the legal dialect of public transactions. Those who united letters with business were equally conversant with both; and it was almost impossible, in any province, to find a Roman subject, of a liberal education, who was at once a stranger to the Greek and to the Latin language.

It was by such institutions that the nations of the empire insensibly melted away into the Roman name and people. But there still remained, in the centre of every province and of every family, an

unhappy condition of men who endured the weight, without sharing the benefits, of society. In the free states of antiquity the domestic slaves were exposed to the wanton rigour of despotism. The perfect settlement of the Roman empire was preceded by ages of violence and rapine. The slaves consisted, for the most part, of barbarian captives, taken in thousands by the chance of war, purchased at a vile price, accustomed to a life of independence, and impatient to break and to revenge their fetters. Against such internal enemies, whose desperate insurrections had more than once reduced the republic to the brink of destruction, the most severe regulations and the most cruel treatment seemed almost justified by the great law of self-preservation. But when the principal nations of Europe, Asia, and Africa were united under the laws of one sovereign, the source of foreign supplies flowed with much less abundance, and the Romans were reduced to the milder but more tedious method of propagation. In their numerous families, and particularly in their country estates, they encouraged the marriage of their slaves. The sentiments of nature, the habits of education, and the possession of a dependent species of property, contributed to alleviate the hardships of servitude. The existence of a slave became an object of greater value, and though his happiness still depended on the temper and circumstances of the master, the humanity of the latter, instead of being restrained by fear, was encouraged by the sense of his own interest. The progress of manners was accelerated by the virtue or policy of the emperors ; and by the edicts of Hadrian and the Antonines the protection of the laws was extended

to the most abject part of mankind. The jurisdiction of life and death over the slaves, a power long exercised and often abused, was taken out of private hands, and reserved to the magistrates alone. The subterraneous prisons were abolished ; and, upon a just complaint of intolerable treatment, the injured slave obtained either his deliverance or a less cruel master.

Hope, the best comfort of our imperfect condition, was not denied to the Roman slave ; and, if he had any opportunity of making himself either useful or agreeable, he might very naturally expect that the diligence and fidelity of a few years would be rewarded with the inestimable gift of freedom. The benevolence of the master was so frequently prompted by the meaner suggestions of vanity and avarice, that the laws found it more necessary to restrain than to encourage a profuse and undistinguishing liberality, which might degenerate into a very dangerous abuse. It was a maxim of ancient jurisprudence, that a slave had not any country of his own ; he acquired with his liberty an admission into the political society of which his patron was a member. The consequences of this maxim would have prostituted the privileges of the Roman city to a mean and promiscuous multitude. Some seasonable exceptions were therefore provided ; and the honourable distinction was confined to such slaves only as, for just causes, and with the approbation of the magistrate, should receive a solemn and legal manumission. Even these chosen freedmen obtained no more than the private rights of citizens, and were rigorously excluded from civil or military honours. Whatever might be the merit or fortune

of their sons, *they* likewise were esteemed unworthy of a seat in the senate ; nor were the traces of a servile origin allowed to be completely obliterated till the third or fourth generation. Without destroying the distinction of ranks, a distant prospect of freedom and honours was presented, even to those whom pride and prejudice almost disdained to number among the human species.

EXPANSION OF THE EMPIRE.

J. A. FROUDE.

In the seventeenth century, when the once brilliant star of Spain was hastening to its setting, when the naval supremacy which Spain had once claimed and made her own was transferred to Great Britain and Holland, and when the superior power of Great Britain, her insular position and her larger population, had assured to her rather than to the Dutch Republic the sceptre of the sea, Sir James Harrington, in a sketch of a perfect commonwealth, half real, half ideal, which he addressed to the Protector, described the future destiny which he believed to be reserved for the Scotch, English, and Anglo-Irish nations.

‘ The situation of these countries, being islands (as appears by Venice how advantageous such an one is to the like government), seems to have been designed by God for a commonwealth. And yet Venice, through the straitness of the place and defect of proper arms, can be no more than a commonwealth for preservation ; whereas Oceana, reduced to a like government, is a commonwealth for increase, and upon the mightiest foundation that any has been laid from the beginning of the world to this day—

*Illam arctâ capiens Neptunus compede stringit,
Hanc autem captus glaucis amplectitur ūlnis.*

The sea gives the law to the growth of Venice, but the growth of Oceana gives the law to the sea.'

In the two centuries and a half which have passed over us since these words were written, the increase of Oceana has exceeded the wildest dream of the most extravagant enthusiast. Harrington would have been himself incredulous had he been told that, within a period so brief in the life of nations, more than fifty million Anglo-Saxons would be spread over the vast continent of North America, carrying with them their religion, their laws, their language, and their manners; that the globe would be circled with their fleets; that in the Southern Hemisphere they would be in possession of territories larger than Europe, and more fertile than the richest parts of it; that wherever they went they would carry with them the genius of English freedom. Yet the vision is but half accomplished. The people have gone out, they have settled, they have cultivated the land, they have multiplied, and although the population of Great Britain and Ireland is now seven-fold greater than it was in the Protectorate of Cromwell, the number of our kindred in these new countries is already double that which remains in the mother country; but Harrington contemplated that Oceana would be a single commonwealth embraced in the arms of Neptune, and the spell which can unite all these communities into one has not yet been discovered. The element on which he calculated to ensure the combination—the popular form of government—has been itself the cause which has prevented it. One free people cannot govern another free people.

The inhabitants of a province retain the instincts which they brought with them. They can ill bear that their kindred at home shall have rights and liberties from which they are excluded. The mother country struggles to retain its authority, while it is jealous of extending its privileges of citizenship. Being itself self-governed, its elected rulers consider the interests and the wishes of the electors whom they represent, and those only. The provincial, or the colonist, being unrepresented, suffers some actual injustice and imagines more. He conceives that he is deprived of his birth-right. He cannot submit to an inferior position, and the alternative arises whether the mother country shall part with its empire or part with its own liberties. Free Athens established a short-lived dominion. Her subordinate states hated her and revolted from her, though the same states submitted quietly immediately after to the Macedonian despotism. Republican Rome conquered the civilized world, but kept it only by ceasing to be a republic. Venice, which Harrington quotes, reserved her constitution for herself, ruling her dependencies by deputy. They envied her liberties. They did not share in her glories or her wealth, and she ceased to be what Harrington calls her, even a commonwealth for preservation. The English in North America had little to thank us for. Many of them had fled thither to escape from religious tyranny. They had forgotten their resentment. They were attached to the old home by custom, by feeling, by the pride of country, which in Englishmen is a superstition. They were bitterly unwilling to leave us. But when we

refused them representation in the British Legislature, when English ministers, looking only, as they were obliged to look, to the British constituencies, hampered their trade, tied them down under Navigation Laws, and finally would have laid taxes on them with or without their own assent, they were too English themselves to submit to a tyranny which England had thrown off. The principles established by the long Parliament were stronger than national affection. The first great branch of Oceana was broken off, and became what we now see it to be—the truest, in the opinion of some, to the traditions of Harrington's commonwealth, and therefore growing or to grow into the main stem of the tree.

But the parent stock was still prolific. The American provinces were gone. New shoots sprang out again, and Oceana was reconstituted once more ; this time, in a form and in a quarter more entirely suited to our naval genius, in the great islands of the South Sea, and at the south point of Africa commanding the sea route to India. The mistakes of George the Third and Lord North were not repeated in the same form, but the spirit in which they were made reappeared, and could not fail to reappear. The Colonial Minister at home and the Colonial Office represent the British Parliament. The British Parliament represents the British constituencies, and to them and to their interests, and their opinions, the minister, whoever he be, and to whatever party he belongs, is obliged to look. The colonies having no one to speak for them, were again sacrificed so long as it was possible to sacrifice them. They were used as convict stations till

they rose in wrath and refused to receive our refuse any more. Their patronage, their civil appointments, judgeships, secretaryships, etc., were given as rewards for political services at home, or at the instance of politically powerful friends. It cannot be otherwise : so long as party government continues, and Secretaries of State have the nomination to public offices, they are compelled (as a high official once put it to me) 'to blood the noses of their own hounds.' Willingly enough they surrendered most of these appointments when the colonies claimed them. It is possible that for the governorships which the Crown retains, the fittest men to occupy them are *bonâ fide* sought for ; yet it is whispered that other considerations still have weight. Nay, when one such appointment was made a few years back, we were drawn into a war in consequence, because some one was the greatest bore in the House of Commons, and there was a universal desire that he should be sent elsewhere.

More serious were the differences which rose continually between the mother country and the colonists respecting the treatment of the native population, whether in Africa, Australia, or New Zealand. The colonists being on the spot, desired, and desire, to keep the natives under control ; to form them into habits of industry, to compel them by fear to respect property and observe the laws. Naturally too, being themselves willing to cultivate the soil, they have not looked very scrupulously to the rights of savages over fertile districts of which they made no use themselves nor would allow others to use them ; and sometimes by purchase, sometimes by less respectable means,

they have driven the natives off their old ground and taken possession of it themselves. The people at home in England, knowing nothing of the practical difficulties, and jealous for the reputation of their country, have obliged their ministers to step between the colonists and the natives: irritating the whites by accusations either wholly false or beyond the truth, and misleading the coloured races into acts of aggression or disobedience, in which they look for support which they have not found. Never able to persist in any single policy, and producing therefore the worst possible results, we first protect these races in an independence which they have been unable to use wisely, and are then driven ourselves into wars with them by acts which they would never have committed if the colonists and they had been left to arrange their mutual relations alone.

The situation has been extremely difficult. It cannot be wondered at, that when war followed on war in New Zealand and South Africa, and British money was spent, and British troops were employed in killing Maoris and Caffres who had done us no harm, and whose crime was believed by many of us to be no more than the possession of land which others coveted, public opinion at home grew impatient. Long bills for these wars appeared in the Budgets year after year. Political economists began to ask what was the use of colonies which contributed nothing to the Imperial exchequer, while they were a constant expense to the taxpayer. They had possessed a value once as a market for English productions, but after the establishment of free trade the world was our market. The colonies, as part of the

world, would still buy of us, and would continue to do so, whether as British dependencies or as free. In case of war we should be obliged to defend them and to scatter our force in doing it. They gave us nothing. They cost us much. They were a mere ornament, a useless responsibility: we did not pause to consider whether, even if it were true that the colonies were at present a burden to us, we were entitled to cut men of our own blood and race thus adrift after having encouraged them to form settlements under our flag. Both parties in the State had been irritated in turn by their experience in Downing Street, and for once both were agreed. The troops were withdrawn from Canada, from Australia, from New Zealand. A single regiment only was to have been left at the Cape to protect our naval station. The unoccupied lands, properly the inheritance of the collective British nation—whole continents large as a second United States—were hurriedly abandoned to the local colonial governments. They were equipped with constitutions modelled after our own, which were to endure as long as the connection with the mother country was maintained, but they were informed, more or less distinctly, that they were as birds hatched in a nest whose parents would be charged with them only till they could provide for themselves, and the sooner they were ready for complete independence, the better the mother country would be pleased.

This was the colonial policy avowed in private by responsible statesmen, and half confessed in public fifteen years ago. And thus it seemed that the second group of territorial acquisitions

which English enterprise had secured was to follow the first. The American provinces had been lost by invasion of their rights. The rest were to be thrown away as valueless. The separation might be called friendly, but the tone which we assumed was as offensive to the colonists as the intended action was unwelcome, and if they were obliged to leave us it would not be as friends that we should part. The English people too had not been treated fairly. A policy so far-reaching ought to have been fully explained to them, and not ventured on without their full consent. A frank avowal of an intention to shake the colonies off would have been fatal to the ministry that made it. Ambiguous expressions were explained away when challenged. We were told that self-government had been given to the colonies only to attach them to us more completely, while measures were taken and language was used which were indisputably designed to lead to certain and early disintegration.

The intention was an open secret among all leading statesmen if it can be called a secret at all, and in the high political circles the result was regarded as assured. 'It is no use,' said an eminent Colonial Office secretary to myself when I once remonstrated, 'to speak about it any longer. The thing is done. The great colonies are gone. It is but a question of a year or two.'

Those were the days of progress by leaps and bounds, of 'unexampled prosperity,' of the apparently boundless future which the repeal of the Corn Laws had opened upon British industry and trade. The fate of Great Britain was that

it was to become the world's great workshop. Her people were to be kept at home and multiply. With cheap labour and cheap coal we could defy competition, and golden streams would flow down in ever-gathering volumes over landowners and mill-owners and shipowners The 'hands' and the 'hands' wives and children? Oh yes, they too would do very well; wages would rise, food would be cheap, employment constant. The colonies brought us nothing. The empire brought us nothing, save expense for armaments and possibilities of foreign complications. Shorn of these wild shoots we should be like an orchard tree pruned of its luxuriance, on which the fruit would grow richer and more abundant.

It was a fine theory, especially for those fortunate ones who could afford parks and deer forests and yachts in the Solent, who would not feel in their own persons the ugly side of it. But the wealth of a nation depends in the long run upon the conditions, mental and bodily, of the people of whom it consists, and the experience of all mankind declares that a race of men sound in soul and limb can be bred and reared only in the exercise of plough and spade, in the free air and sunshine, with country enjoyments and amusements, never amidst foul drains and smoke blacks and the eternal clank of machinery. And in the England which these politicians designed for us there would be no country left save the pleasure grounds and game preserves of the rich. All else would be town. There would be no room in any other shape for the crowded workmen who were to remain as the creators of the wealth.

What England would become was to be seen already in the enormously extended suburbs of London and our great manufacturing cities : miles upon miles of squalid lanes, each house the duplicate of its neighbour ; the dirty street in front, the dirty yard behind, the fetid smell from the ill-made sewers, the public house at the street corners. Here, with no sight of a green field, with no knowledge of flowers or forest, the blue heavens themselves dirtied with soot—amidst objects all mean and hideous, with no entertainment but the music hall, no pleasure but in the drink shop—hundreds of thousands of English children are now growing up into men and women. And were these scenes to be indefinitely multiplied ? Was this to be the real condition of an ever-increasing portion of the English nation ? And was it to be supposed that a race of men could be so reared who could carry on the great traditions of our country ? I for one could not believe it. The native vigour of our temperament might defy the influence of such a life for a quarter or for half a century. Experience, even natural probability, declared that the grand-children of the occupants of these dens must be sickly, poor and stunted wretches whom no school teaching, however excellent, could save from physical decrepitude.

The tendency of people in the later stages of civilization to gather into towns is an old story. Horace had seen in Rome what we are now witnessing in England,—the fields deserted, the people crowding into cities. He noted the growing degeneracy. He foretold the inevitable consequences.

Non his juvenus orta parentibus
 Infecit æquor sanguine Punico,
 Pyrrhumque et ingentem cecidit
 Antiochum, Hannibalemque dirum :
 Sed rusticorum mascula militum
 Proles, Sabellis docta ligonibus
 Versare glebas, et severæ
 Matris ad arbitrium recisos
 Portare fustes.*

And Horace was a true prophet. The Latin peasant, the legionary of the Punic wars, had ceased to exist. He had drifted into the cities, where he could enjoy himself at the circus, and live chiefly on free rations. The virtue—*virtus*—manliness was gone out of him. Slaves tilled the old farms, Gauls and Spaniards and Thracians took his place in the army. In the Senate and in the professions the Roman was supplanted by the provincial. The corruption spread. The strength which had subdued the world melted finally away. The German and the Hun marched in over the Imperial border, and Roman civilization was at an end.

There is not much fear in England (spite of recent strange political phenomena) that we shall see idle city mobs sustained on free grants of

* They did not spring from sires like these,
 The noble youth who dyed the seas
 With Carthaginian gore ;
 Who great Antiochus overcame,
 And Hannibal of yore ;
 But they of rustic warriors wight
 The manly offspring learned to smite
 The soil with Sabine spade,
 And faggots they had to out to bear
 Home from the forest whensoever
 An austere mother bade.—Martin's *Horace*, Odes (iii).6.

corn ; but a population given over to employments which must and will undermine the physical vigour of the race, generations of children growing under conditions which render health impossible, will come to the same thing. Decay is busy at the heart of them, and the fate of Rome seemed to me likely to be the fate of England if she became what the political economists desired to see her. That 'man shall not live by bread alone' is as true as ever it was ; true for week days as well as Sundays, for common sense as for theology. These islands cannot bear a larger population than they have at present without peril to soul and body. It appeared as if the genius of England, anticipating the inevitable increase, had provided beforehand for the distribution of it. English enterprise had occupied the fairest spots upon the globe where there was still soil and sunshine boundless and life-giving ; where the race might for ages renew its mighty youth, bring forth as many millions as it would, and would still have means to breed and rear them strong as the best which she had produced in her early prime. The colonists might be paying us no revenue, but they were opening up the face of the earth. By-and-by, like the spreading branches of a forest tree, they would return the sap which they were gathering into the heart. England could pour out among them, in return, year after year, those poor children of hers now choking in fetid alleys, and, relieved of the strain, breathe again fresh air into her own smoke-encrusted lungs. With her colonies part of herself, she would be, as Harrington had foreshadowed, a commonwealth resting on the

mightiest foundations which the world had ever seen. Queen among the nations, from without invulnerable, and at peace and at health within, —this was the alternative future lying before Oceana ; in every way more desirable than the economic. Unlike other good things it was easy of attainment ; we had but to stretch our hand out to secure it ; yet we sat still doing nothing as if enchanted, while the Sibyl was teasing out page on page from the Book of Destiny.

Impossible ! the politicians said : yet it was not impossible for the United States to refuse to be divided. The United States tore their veins open and spilt their blood in torrents that they might remain one people. There was no need for any blood to be shed to keep us one people, yet we talked placidly of impossibilities. The United States, it was said, were parts of a single continent. No ocean ran between south and north, or east and west. Our colonies were dispersed over the globe. What Nature had divided, man could not bind together ; without continuity of soil there could be no single empire. Excuses are not wanting when the will is wanting. The ocean which divides, combines also ; and had the problem been theirs and not ours, the Americans would perhaps have found that the sea is the easiest of highways, which telegraph wires underlie and steamers traverse with the ease and certainty of railway cars. 'Impossibility' is a word of politicians who are without the wish or without the capacity to comprehend new conditions. An 'empire' of Oceana there cannot be. The English race do not like to be parts of an empire. But a 'commonwealth' of Oceana held together

by common blood, common interest, and a common pride in the great position which unity can secure—such a commonwealth as this may grow of itself if politicians can be induced to leave it alone.

As the colonies have been hitherto dealt with—made use of in the interests of the mother country as long as they would submit, and then called valueless, and advised to take themselves away—they are in no mood for a union which may bring them again under the authority of Downing Street. But affronts have not estranged them. They have been in no haste to meet the offer of independence. They claim still their share in the inheritance of the nation from which they have sprung. British they are and British they wish to remain, and impossible as it is to weld together two pieces of steel while below the welding temperature, let the desire for a union of equality rise in England and rise in the colonies to sufficient heat, the impossibility will become a possibility, and of political possibilities the easiest.

Our people stream away from us. Out of the hundreds of thousands of English, Scots, and Irish who annually leave our shores, eighty per cent have gone hitherto to the United States, and only the remaining fraction to the countries over which our own flag is flying. I once asked the greatest, or at least the most famous, of modern English statesmen whether, in the event of a great naval war, we might not look for help to the 60,000 Canadian seamen and fishermen. 'The Canadian seamen,' he said, 'belong to Canada, not to us ;'

and then going to the distribution of our emigrants, he insisted that there was not a single point in which an Englishman settling in Canada or Australia was of more advantage to us than as a citizen of the American Union. The use of him was as a purchaser of English manufactures—that was all. Sir Arthur Helps told me a story singularly illustrative of the importance which the British official mind has hitherto allowed to the distant scions of Oceana. A Government had gone out; Lord Palmerston was forming a new ministry, and in a preliminary council was arranging the composition of it. He had filled up the other places. He was at a loss for a Colonial Secretary. This name and that ~~was~~ suggested, and thrown aside. At last he said, ‘I suppose I must take the thing myself. Come upstairs with me, Helps, when the council is over. We will look at the maps and you shall show me where these places are.’

The temper represented in this cool indifference is passing away. The returns of trade show in the first place that commerce follows the flag. Our colonists take three times as much of our productions in proportion to their numbers as foreigners take. The difference increases rather than diminishes, and the Australian, as a mere consumer, ~~is~~ more valuable to us than the American. What more he may be, his voluntary presence at Suakin has indicated for him to all the world. But more than this. It has become doubtful even to the political economist, whether England can trust entirely to free trade and competition to keep the place which she has hitherto held. Other nations press us with their rivalries.

Expenses increase, manufactures languish or cease to profit. Revenue, once so expansive, becomes stationary. 'Business' may, probably will, blaze up again, but the growth of it can no longer be regarded as constant, while population increases and hungry stomachs multiply, requiring the three meals a day whatever the condition of the markets. Hence those among us who have disbelieved all along that a great nation can venture its whole fortunes safely on the power of underselling its neighbours in calicoes and iron-work no longer address a public opinion entirely cold. It begins to be admitted that were Canada and South Africa and Australia and New Zealand members of one body with us, with a free flow of our population into them, we might sit secure against shifts and changes. In the multiplying number of our own fellow-citizens animated by a common spirit, we should have purchasers for our goods from whom we should fear no rivalry; we should turn in upon them the tide of our emigrants which now flows away, while the emigrants themselves would thrive under their own fig tree, and rear children with stout limbs and colour in their cheeks, and a chance before them of a human existence. Oceana would then rest on sure foundations; and her navy—the hand of her strength and the symbol of her unity—would ride securely in self-supporting stations in the four quarters of the globe.

To the magnificence of such an Oceana, were it but attainable, the dullest imagination can no longer blind itself. But how? but how? the impatient politician asks. We may dream, but he must act. He has heard of no scheme of

union which is not impracticable on the face of it, and because we cannot give him a constitution ready made he shuts his ears. He can do nothing better. We do not ask him to act ; we ask him only to leave things alone. An acorn will not expand into an oak if the forester is for ever digging at its roots and clipping its young shoots. Constitutions, commonwealths, are not manufactured to pattern ; they grow, if they grow, at all, by internal impulse. The people of England have made the colonies. The people at home and the people in the colonies are one people. The feeling of identity is perhaps stronger in the colonies than at home. They are far away, and things to which we are indifferent because we have ~~them~~ are precious in the distance. There is fresh blood in those young countries. Sentiment remains a force in them, as it is in boys, and has survived the chilly winds which have blown from Downing Street : the sentiment itself is life ; and when the people desire that it shall take organic form, the rest will be easy. If statesmen had not in other days overcome greater difficulties than any which are then likely to present themselves, the English nation would have dragged out an obscure existence within the limits of its own islands, and would not have made the noise in the world which it has done.

No such commonwealth as Harrington imagined for his Oceana was, or ever can be, more than Utopia. Harrington, like the Abbé Siéyès, believed that constitutions could be made in a closet, and fitted like a coat to ~~the~~ the back. But the arduous part of it is no longer to create : it is an achieved fact. The land is our

possession. We ourselves—the forty-five millions of British subjects, those at home and those already settled upon it—are a realized family which desires not to be divided. If there have been family differences, they have not yet risen into discord. The past cannot be wholly undone by soft words and a mere change of tone in political circles. We and the colonists have lived apart and have misunderstood one another. They require to be convinced that the people of England have never shared in the views of their leaders. We have been indifferent, and occupied with our own affairs; but we, the people, always regarded them as our kindred, bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh. They will never submit again to be ruled from England. The branch is not ruled by the stem; the leaf does not ask the branch what form it shall assume, or the flower ask what shall be its colour; but if the colonists know that as their feeling is to us so is ours to them, branch, leaf, and flower will remain incorporate upon the stem, aiming at no severed existence, and all together, indispensable each to each and mutually strengthening each other, will form one majestic organism which may defy the storms of fate.

So I, many years ago, as a student of England's history and believing in its future greatness, imagined for myself the Oceana that might be. But having no personal knowledge of the colonies, I could but preach vaguely from the pulpits of reviews and magazines, and finding my sermons as useless as such compositions generally are, I determined myself to make a tour among them, to talk to their leading men,

see their countries and what they were doing there, learn their feelings, and correct my impressions of what could or could not be done. I set out for this purpose. Accident detained me at the Cape of Good Hope, entangled me in Cape politics, and consumed the leisure which I could then spare. After an interval of ten years, finding that I had still strength enough for such an enterprise, and time and opportunity permitting, I resumed my dropped intention. I do not regret the delay. In the interval the colonies have shown more clearly than before that they are as much English as we are, and deny our right to part with them. At home the advocates of separation have been forced into silence, and the interest in the subject has grown into practical anxiety. The union which so many of us now hope for may prove an illusion after all. The feeling which exists on both sides may be a warm one, but not warm enough to heat us, as I said, to the welding point.

Τὰ πάντα θεῶν ἐν γούνασι κεῖται.

The event, whatever it is to be, lies already determined, the philosophers tell us, in the chain of causation. What is to be, will be. But it is not more determined than all else which is to happen to us, and the determination does not make us sit still and wait till it comes. Among the causes are included our own exertions, and each of us must do what he can, be it small or great, as this course or that seems good and right to him. If we work on the right side, coral

insects as we are, we may contribute something not wholly useless to the general welfare.

However this may be, in the closing years of my own life I have secured for myself a delightful experience. I have travelled through lands where patriotism is not a sentiment to be laughed at—not, as Johnson defined it, ‘the last refuge of a scoundrel,’ but an active passion—where I never met a hungry man or saw a discontented face—where, in the softest and sweetest air, and in an unexhausted soil, the fable of Midas is reversed, food does not turn to gold, but the gold with which the earth is teeming converts itself into farms and vine-yards, into flocks and herds, into crops of wild luxuriance, into cities whose recent origin is concealed and compensated by trees and flowers—where children grow who seem once more to understand what was meant by “merry England.” Amidst the uncertainties which are gathering round us at home—a future so obscure that the wisest men will least venture a conjecture what that future will be, it is something to have seen with our own eyes that there are other Englands besides the old one, where the race is thriving with all its ancient characteristics. Those who take ‘leaps in the dark,’ as we are doing, may find themselves in unexpected places before they recover the beaten tracks again. But let Fate do its worst, the family of Oceana is still growing, and will have a sovereign voice in the coming fortunes of mankind.

